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ENGLISH DEVOTIONAL LITERATURE
[PROSE]
1600-1640

BY

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TO

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INTRODUCTION

Even in the present revival of interest in the literature of the first half of the seventeenth century in England one large and important section of that literature has as yet failed to receive either the attention or the interest which it deserves. The drama of the period, strained and decadent as much of it is, has for a century found patient and admiring readers and students. The great poets of the age like Donne and Crashaw and Vaughan, while still neither known nor appreciated in comparison with the vogue of later poets, have yet received, particularly in the last ten years, much and enthusiastic regard. So have many of the political and philosophic writers, like Lord Herbert, Sir Francis Bacon, and Thomas Hobbes. In fact the very fly-sheets and street ballads and broadsides of the time have found meticulous editorship and comment. But with a few conspicuous exceptions the religious books of the period, notably that group which, to distinguish them from works of controversy and theological exegesis, we may call the books of devotion, have been almost entirely neglected. And that neglect is the more striking because of the attention which has been paid in France to the French books of devotion of that time and a little later. In English there is not only nothing to compare with, there is not even anything like *L'Humanisme Dévot*, the Abbé Brémond's great study of the religious genius of sixteenth and seventeenth century France.

Part of this neglect is undoubtedly due to the circumstance that at the present time religious literature has as a genre no very extended hold on the interest or respect of literary men, and that among cultivated people in general it is regarded as a more or less special field of interest, definitely religious rather than literary. Probably, this narrow conception of religious literature is more prevalent in the United States than in England, if the relative proportions of attention devoted to religious books in the reviews of New York and London may be taken as an index to

popular interest It would be easy to explain if not completely to justify this attitude, but the important thing for our purposes is not the reason for its existence but its consequences for our approach to the literature of the past

To begin with, we find it very hard to realize that in the first half of the seventeenth century religious writing, far from being a special interest on the periphery of literature, was at the very center The greatest literary masterpiece of the seventeenth century, it need hardly be pointed out, Milton's *Paradise Lost,* belonged to this genre Religious themes engaged the best talents of poet and prose writer, both on the Puritan and the Cavalier side, and those problems of human life with which religion has traditionally concerned itself engaged the profoundest thinking of some of the most thoughtful and gifted men of the time Even those details of dogma and theological interpretation which today the layman leaves somewhat contemptuously to the ecclesiastical expert appealed to some of the most robustly intellectual laymen of the day Francis Bacon, certainly not to be suspected of any undue religious enthusiasm, in his survey of the advance of knowledge in his time spoke with respect and appreciation of the distinction which the English preachers had achieved in the field of Biblical comment and interpretation,[1] and men like the physician Sir Thomas Browne and the unregenerate John Donne, in the days before any shadow of St Paul's had fallen across the worldly prospects of the young love poet and courtier, obviously devoted much time and energy to what would now seem to us highly abstruse and technical studies in theology and homiletics In short, religion as a science and a humanity played a very large part in the consideration of thinking men, even of men whom we have no reason to consider especially religious.

With the generality of men and women religious literature was of even greater importance. For much of that curiosity about the world which now sends intelligent people to psychology, science, philosophy, or biography was then satisfied within the field of religion If it be true that a man who today confined his attention strictly to religious reading would find himself in possession of but a partial and indirect view of a very large portion of contemporary

[1] Sir Francis Bacon, *The Advancement of Learning,* ed William Aldis Wright (Oxford, 1900), p 264

life and thought, it is equally true that any one who out of modern prejudice disregards the religious literature of the first half of the seventeenth century will find himself quite as much outside of some of the most important and characteristic movements of thought and feeling of that age

To begin with, religious literature constituted a much larger portion of the reading of the seventeenth century than we always realize In the year 1620, for instance, to take a year in the middle of our period, about a hundred and thirty books were entered at Stationers' Hall in London Of this number a little more than half were religious books, that is, books of sermons, of scriptural exegesis, of religious controversy, of the various types of sacred verse, of prayers, of lives and sufferings of martyrs, and triumphs of the godly, indeed of all the various types of religious literature And of these at least a dozen were in purpose and scope clearly devotional [2]

From the point of view of sheer numbers the seventy-odd look very impressive, and nothing should here be said to weaken that effect in a generation more prone to underestimate than to exaggerate the interest of theology But it is the dozen books that need special attention For too often they are forgotten The reader unfamiliar with the contents of either group is usually aware that the seventeenth century devoted much time and energy to the definition and maintenance of a type of theological position in which their descendants, even where they have kept the same sectarian lines, find no vital interest, but he very seldom realizes that in what he considers dry bones, there was once life, sometimes of a very vigorous and glowing type, and that the conception of the world and man's life in it that his forefathers built up around that framework was a real view of the world and of man's life Where the books of theology too often give us only the abstractions of seventeenth century religion, and the books of history only the dramatic externals of ancient battles, the books of devotion give us some glimpse, even on time-yellowed pages, of the inner life and spirit that made these half-forgotten dramas

[2] It is, of course, true that the Stationers' Register is a very incomplete guide to the publications of the period, but in this matter of general proportions and distribution of types its suggestions are of value

and these too often now wholly despised abstractions such burning realities in their own day

For the book of devotion leaves all matter of controversy and of explanation and of interpretation to the defenders and the doctors of faith and concentrates its resources on the realization of that pattern of life which all religious effort strives to commend and to the exploration and the appropriation of those values which religion seeks to vindicate and to propagate Theology lays the ground for and raises the temple of religion, but devotion takes the hand of the believer and leads him into the presence of the God he has been seeking True, here as in so many human enterprises what for genius is the mysterious self-fulfillment of art becomes for teacher and taught on the less esoteric levels of everyday experience the study and discipline of technique, but where the theory still springs warm from immediate experience, there is yet some infection of the mystical in the modest objectiveness of technique Hence the life and the variety and the charm of the body of literature that is represented in those dozen books of 1620 They give us the inside of that tremendous religious activity of the age, and when we remember how close to the centre that activity was, we realize how deep into the life of the time these books may take us

Viewed superficially, these dozen works may seem but a mere half-pennyworth of devotion to an intolerable deal of controversy But when it is remembered that the period we are studying covers something more than forty years, it is obvious that the number of books involved is very considerable At a rough estimate, something between three and four hundred of these devotional books must be still in existence It is reasonable to suppose that an unusually large proportion of such books, as compared, say, with volumes of plays, has survived, for they are the sort of thing that people with family libraries in those days would be likely to preserve and hand down On the other hand, some allowance must be made for the fact that it is precisely those books which a great many people have that no antiquarian is likely to collect Altogether, it is probable that about three-quarters of the books actually published have come down to us.

In trying to estimate the volume of this devotional literature we must not forget that many of these books were very widely circulated in edition after edition. Of Thomas Becon's *The Sicke mannes Salue,* first published some time before 1560, at least seventeen editions still survive from the sixty-odd years between 1561 and 1632 [3] Samuel Hieron's *A Helpe vnto Deuotion,* which was entered in the Stationers' Register in 1608, had run to twenty editions by 1636 Arthur Dent's *The Plaine Mans Path-way to Heauen* went through twenty-five editions between 1601 and 1640, and Lewis Bayly's *The Practise of Pietie* through at least thirty-six, and perhaps more, between 1612 and 1636 Entered in the Stationers' Register in 1623, Michael Sparke's *The Crums of Comfort* had gone through ten editions by 1629 And in 1652 Sparke himself in the orthodox address to "the Godly Reader" prefixed to the second part of *The Crums of Comfort* said that the first part of this book of meditations and preparations for death had run to forty impressions Such editions were doubtless often from modern standards small, but there was nothing insignificant in the aggregate of the series of editions, for in the same passage Sparke tells us that the forty impressions mentioned above totalled more than sixty thousand copies, and that they had all been sold [4]

Michael Sparke, in particular, seems to have been a publisher on a large scale, as we learn from the testimony which William Turner of the University of Oxford, printer, gave in answer to the questions of the Ecclesiastical Commissioners on May 6, 1631 Within the last half year, deposes Turner, he had printed "with Sparke" fifteen hundred copies of the *Book of Promises* or *Saint's Legacies,* three thousand copies of *Dent's Sermons,* and two thousand copies of five sermons of Dr Preston [5] Altogether, the number of such books in circulation in any one year must have been very large

While the authorship of these books is on the whole not so distinguished as that of the devotional poetry of the time, it is

[3] Here, as throughout this book, estimates of editions are based on Pollard and Redgrave's *Short-Title Catalogue of Books Printed in England, Scotland, and Ireland, and of English Books Printed Abroad, 1475-1640,* supplemented, where feasible, by a check of the copies in the British Museum

[4] Michael Sparke, *The Crums of Comfort to Groans of the Spirit, The Second Part,* etc (London, 1652), sig ¶$_{5}^{v}$

[5] *Calendar of State Papers, Domestic Series, Charles I, 1631-1633,* ed John Bruce (London, 1862), p 35

nevertheless worth note Although the *Godly Meditations or Prayers* which the young Princess Elizabeth added to her translation of Margaret of Navarre's *A Godly Meditation of the inwarde loue of the Soule* were first published long before our period, in 1548, and the *Precationes priuatae Regiae E R* which Thomas Purfoot published in 1563 are, as the title suggests, in Latin, still, taken together, they may be suffered to place their royal author first on the roll of our devotional writers It is a fitting beginning, for a very large number of these books are signed with names famous in their own day, and some with names not unknown today The reputations of Joseph Hall, of Giles Fletcher, and of Phineas Fletcher have in varying degrees survived to the present Sir John Conway was a man of consequence in his day, Anthony Stafford enjoyed considerable literary reputation in his own time, while William Crashaw was one of the most distinguished preachers of the age Others whose reputations have not remained green even in the memory of students were yet in their day men of no mean standing As might be expected, many of these writers were university men, and a majority, clergymen, signing themselves *ministers, ministers of the word, lecturers,* according to the party to which they adhered in the rapidly sharpening divisions of the time Of these a goodly number had risen or were to rise to episcopal dignities—John Cosin, George Downame, Thomas Morton, George Webbe, James Usher, to name some of the most distinguished among them

One of these writers is a woman, Elizabeth Grymeston, the author of *Miscelanea Meditations Memoratiues* She must have been a very remarkable woman, for while she invades masculine domain with something of the unconscious aggressiveness of an Ann Cook or a Margaret Roper of earlier generations, there is not the slightest pose of masculinity in her book In view of the rarity at this time of literary work from the pens of women, there is something peculiarly moving in the direct simplicity with which Elizabeth Grymeston speaks out of her distinctively feminine experience to an audience that is conceived of as indifferently human Just as men draw on the commonplaces of their experience for elucidation or illustration, so Elizabeth quite casually draws on hers in the following explanation "He whose life was a studie

to die, well knowes that death hath lost his tartenesse by passing through the veines of life. he feares not his cold sweats, nor forgoing gripes, but taketh them as throwes in childe-bed, by which our soul is brought out of a lothsome body into eternall felicitie."[6]

So far no mention has been made of those undoubted masters of the devotional life whose works will be discussed briefly in the concluding chapter, nor is there need of saying much of them here, for theirs are names well known to all students of the period. Lancelot Andrewes, John Donne, Richard Baxter, Jeremy Taylor—to name their names is enough. To such heights did this devotional literature rise, to such names did it give glory, and from such take glory.

But even without such great names the writers of these books taken as a group would compare more than favorably with either the writers of religious books of today or the writers of other types of books of popular instruction. They are men of education and, what is of perhaps even more consequence for books of this type, men of genuine intellectual cultivation. In the majority of cases they are men of more than average ability and more than ordinary breadth of experience, often quite obviously experience outside their particular profession. As a result, they move with the assurance and poise of men who are fairly sure of their world, and in the seventeenth century that world was no narrow one.

Taken as a whole, these books of devotion are genuinely democratic in their appeal and in their conception of their audience. With the exception of a few works composed on the Continent, they are in no way designed for specialists in the religious life. They are for men and women living ordinary lay lives in the world. Simon Wastel, "sometimes of Queenes Colledge in Oxford, now Schoole-master of the Free-Schoole in Northampton," deliberately addressed his *A True Christians Daily Delight*, an English version of John Shaw's *Bibliorum Summula*, to the less sophisticated. "I haue purposely laboured to speake plainly, to the capacity and vnderstanding of the simple and ignorant, rather then by poeticall straines to please the eare, and the eye of the curious learned Readers."[7]

[6] Elizabeth Grymeston, Miscelanea. Meditations. Memoratiues (London, 1604), sig. D_2^v.

[7] Simon Wastel, *A True Christians Daily Delight* (London, 1623), sig. A_4^v.

Sometimes an author chooses a particular group of plain folk for his readers Merchants seem to have been especially favored, for a goodly number of manuals addressed to them have survived from this period Immanuel Bourne, for instance, directs *The Godly Mans Guide* especially to "Merchants and Tradesmen, Shewing how they may so buy, and sell, and get Gaine, that they may Gaine Heauen" On this point, one on which by the way a good many moralists of that age as of this were not too encouraging, the author is distinctly unapologetic, indeed, he is a little aggressive in his defence For he does not content himself with pointing out that merchandise is lawful by the Law of Nature, the Law Written, and the Law of Grace, but he goes on to claim for it high glory in a passage delightfully characteristic of the time in its pedantry and its realism "And hence it comes to passe that as Merchandise hath beene auncient, euen in the dayes of *Noah* (as *Iosephus* affirmes) so it hath beene glorious in former Ages, By this we haue gotten acquaintance with forreigne Nations, and the Kingdome of *Christ* hath beene enlarged, By this we haue leagues of amitie, contracted with people of diuers Languages By this we have gotten knowledge, and experience in seuerall Sciences Yea, some Merchants haue beene builders of great and famous Cities (as *Plutarke* in *Solon* reporteth) And not to trauell like a Merchant beyond the Sea, if we make a search neerer home, how many religious Merchants and Tradesmen, haue been Benefactors to the Vniuersities, for the maintenance of learning and Pietie

"Yea, this Citie can witnesse their workes of charitie to the poore; and this Place is not silent of that good, it hath and doth dayly receiue from them "[8]

The author was himself "Preacher of God's Word at Saint Christophers neere the Exchange in London" So it is only fitting that he should have written a book which deserves a place beside John Donne's famous sermon to the "honourable Company of the Virginian Plantation" as one of the spiritual charters of the British Empire.

Even more democratic was the unknown B. P who in 1608 published *The Prentises Practise in godlinesse, and his true free-*

[8] Immanuel Bourne, *The Godly Mans Guide*, etc (London, 1620), pp 26-27

dome When the complaints of the City Fathers of the time are remembered, B P is seen to have been either a very tactful or a very optimistic elder, for he addresses his book "To the religiously disposed and vertuous yong men, the Apprentises of the City of London "[9] And he lures them to the reading of his little book of edification by the display on his title-page of the promise of Proverbs 17 2 "A discreet Seruant shall haue more rule then the Sonnes that haue no wisedome, and shall haue like heritage with the Brethren "

Another type of special interest book is that designed for women A very good example is to be found in an old book which William Seres published in 1574 in miniature form designed apparently to encourage female piety to keep it handy in a pocket or perhaps dangling from the girdle It is called *A Tablet for Gentlewomen* The view of women's life which it inculcates is strictly orthodox, as may be gathered from "A prayer for Maydes" with its classic first premise "There is nothing that becommeth a maid better than silence "[10]

But usually these manuals of prayer do not so specify their unseen auditory Rather they make provision for the various emergencies of unspecified human life, with prayers for soldiers, for travellers by sea, cheek by jowl with prayers for a woman in travail, for one ill, for a scholar, for a servant In view of the respectability so dear to the heart of the seventeenth century pious, it is pleasant to find in Samuel Hieron's *A Helpe vnto Deuotion* prayers for one in prison and for one before execution. As the author said on his title-page, he made his prayers "for the furtherance of those, who haue more desire then skill, to poure out their soules by petition vnto God."[11]

Apparently, readers of all classes appreciated such efforts to meet their peculiar needs, for examples of the popularity of these books of devotion and of the very real influence which they exerted in the lives of individual men and women abound One may stand for many, probably unusual only in that it concerns a man of genius When the young tinker of Bedfordshire, John Bunyan,

[9] B P, *The Prentises Practise in godlinesse, and his true freedome* (London, 1608), sig A_3

[10] *A Tablet for Gentlewomen* (London, 1574), sigs F_2-F_5^v

[11] Samuel Hieron, *A Helpe vnto Deuotion*, etc (4th ed , London, 1612)

married a "godly man's daughter" in 1649, she was so poor that she brought him for a dowry neither dish nor spoon but two books only Those two were books of devotion, Lewis Bayly's *The Practise of Pietie* and Arthur Dent's *The Plaine Man's Path-way to Heauen*[12] Apparently even the poorest and the most unlettered might reach to the popular book of devotion, but one has only to read *The Plaine-Mans Path-way to Heauen* to see how high the literary quality of these books might be An earnest and imaginative young man who had such a book to brood over might remain from our standpoint a simple-minded peasant, but, granted that he was a genius, there is much in the earlier book to set him on the road to *The Pilgrim's Progress*

Not all of these books had the good fortune to serve for the stimulus and nourishment of genius, but even those of obscurer influence are of value and interest to the student of literature For they give us with simplicity and homely informality the ground of religious thought and feeling out of which sprang the masterpieces of the time both in prose and in verse For this field they give us, as almost nothing else can, the voice of the age to itself. Here we may surprise its most intimate hopes and fears in the region of its deepest concern. The puzzlement over the bounds of innovation, the struggle to establish certain criteria of truth, the fear of Enthusiasm, the fear of sterility, the search for peace, the yearning for beauty, the passion for bringing order and harmony into the conflict of a strenuous epoch of transition and reconstruction, all of these dominant impulses of the time come again and again to the surface, all the more poignantly moving because of the simplicity, the scarcely-aware fugitiveness of the revelation

The field is very large, and practically nothing has been done to make it available for students of the thought and feeling, to say nothing of the literature, of the time The present undertaking is a critical introduction to this literature. No effort is made to cover the whole field in any census fashion But a variety of checks has convinced the writer that the couple of hundred books considered in this study represent all the essential types and characteristics of the field The presentation of these characteristics

[12] John Bunyan, *The Pilgrim's Progress, Grace Abounding and A Relation of his Imprisonment*, ed Edmund Venables, etc (Oxford, 1925), p 300

and the attempt to suggest their value and significance have necessitated a preliminary survey of the religious situation out of which this literature came and in which it was to play no small part This is followed by studies of the literary influences that contributed to the shaping of this material, both those surviving from the pre-Reformation past of England and those newly arriving from the contemporary religious literature of the Continent, both Catholic and Protestant One of the most fascinating aspects of this subject is the study of this foreign influence, particularly that of the continental Catholic books of devotion upon loyal and convinced Protestants, and one of the most amusing is the type of adaptation which these writers made in their translation of such books to make them available for the religious life of England The works of the Recusant exiles receive some attention for their own very high degree of interest as well as for their influence on the home literature, but no effort is made to do them the justice they deserve, because, for the most part, they remain outside the main stream of the development of English literature This very important and essential preliminary work is followed, first, by a rough survey of the field for subject matter and method of development, then, by an effort to define the general point of view, or points of view, and the dominating intellectual and imaginative interests of these books, and finally, by a brief discussion of the literary quality of this material taken as a whole The book concludes with a very summary presentation of the triumphs of this type of literature in some of the prose masterpieces of our period and the years immediately following Throughout, the method of the book is highly selective, for its aim is to open up a neglected and forgotten field of literature which throws very important light upon the masterpieces in verse and prose of one of the most engrossing periods in the history of English letters

Some word of explanation concerning the limits here set for the period under consideration should be included in these preliminary remarks The opening of a new century, if not construed too literally, is always a temptation for the delimiting of periods In this case it has more logical justification than in most, for in spite of the inevitable blurring of the dateless transitions of history there can be no question that in England there was a real difference

between the literature of the last quarter of the sixteenth century and the first quarter of the seventeenth century, and quite as great a difference in the development of the religious life of the time The opening of the Civil War in 1640 marks an even more definite break both for literature and religion Few periods in English history can show clearer claims to an organic character than that from 1600 to 1640, a fact that has been generally recognized in literary history

When a whole literature such as this of the devotional books is under consideration, it is impossible to hold to chronological lines too rigidly A good many of the books that circulated most widely in the years from 1600 to 1640 were actually written anywhere from 1580 on Sometimes they went through a variety of modifications in the course of successive editions, sometimes very little change was needed to hold a special audience that clung tenaciously to established positions in the face of threatened innovation, sometimes an earlier book had anticipated with almost prophetic insight the temper and direction of devotional life a score of years later Indeed, there were books that in themselves set in motion the currents of thought and feeling that were to move the new generation Finally, some of the most characteristic tendencies of this period achieved their fullest expression only after the actual close of the period itself For these reasons a number of books written before the opening of the century and a very few written after 1640 are included in this book because in every way they belong to the group we are studying In other words, the period indicated by these dates is not an arbitrary cross-section but a genuinely organic period in the history of English culture

CHAPTER I

The Religious Background of the First Half of the Seventeenth Century

There is probably no age that from some point of view is not an age of transition But to a very unusual degree the opening years of the seventeenth century in England were years of crisis, years in which the spiritual entity of a whole period was being forged and in which the new world which was to supersede that as yet unrealized world was already in the making In other words, that systole and diastole of revolution and of consolidation, of innovation and of concentration, by which historic life seems to operate in this world of provisional certainties and transient victories is apparent to an uncommon degree in the events of these years And nowhere is it more evident than in the developments of the religious situation, which for almost the last time in the modern world holds the centre of the stage of practical affairs

The Church of England is more essential to the study of this period than to that of any subsequent one because as yet, in spite of no little confusion and uncertainty, it still included within its fold the vast majority of the nation tacitly, and explicitly the whole body of orthodox Protestantism and large elements of what has since developed into unorthodox Protestantism This was the age of one hundred per cent Anglicanism, as it was of unity and harmony and oneness of spirit in Inquisition-bound Spain That fear of chaos that haunted the more depressed moments of the Elizabethan and was so terribly realized and justified in the religious wars of the Continent made almost all parties, certainly all parties that had any hope of being able to dominate the situation, convinced of the necessity of national unity not only in politics but in religion as well Moreover, as we shall see when we come to consider the Enthusiasm of the period, there had already been time for some of the consequences of the Protestant hoisting of

the banner of liberty to make themselves felt Thus political and social emergencies came to reenforce the inherited metaphysic of the time For the orthodox Protestantism of the seventeenth century had inherited the mediaeval conception of the all-inclusive and dominant church, and when practical circumstance had forced the Protestant confessions to adhere to national restrictions, the passion for exclusive dominance had in no wise abated Indeed, in England the merging of the church sense and the national sense intensified the strength of both, so that the ignominy of treason was heaped upon the religious dissenter in the case of the Recusant, or Catholic who refused to accept the supremacy of the King in church matters, and of enmity to all organized society and morality in the case of the Anabaptist The Church of England was to be coterminous with the State of England. All the people of England were expected to be members of this state church On this point all orthodox Protestants were agreed, and those who disagreed were not only a minority in numbers and power but by definition were excluded from the consideration of all right-minded people. The modern psychologist might attribute to this fact the large part which these pariahs played in the nightmares of their right-minded contemporaries

By the beginning of the seventeenth century the position of the Church of England was assured, and it was in itself a mature institution One can already discern something like an Anglican point of view, an Anglican temper. It is certainly a spiritual reality, but it is a church divided against itself, in which strongly opposed tendencies confront each other, unabashed by the hereditary spirit of compromise which holds them together It is not difficult for the modern student to pick out in that vivid past the elements that went to the making of the English Church as we know it today, but standing among them without the events of the three centuries that have since passed to illumine his judgment, it is by no means certain that he would have found it so easy to pick out what was the core of the English Church *per se* And there is always to be remembered that dream that has survived the disillusionments of three hundred years, of some *modus vivendi* that would include the whole nation. But something still eludes, the temper of the dreamer who holding his own point of view with tenderness can

yet look upon his neighbor's with charity, the mind of the dreamer in which the opposing ends of the matter tend to draw to each other in an ineffable embrace above the pickets of logic On that point at least, the modern student dropped suddenly into the middle of the seventeenth century could have no illusions The religious leader of that time was as enthusiastic for unity and peace and moderation as his modern descendant, but he saw only one way of achieving that end, and that was his own It is easy for us to feel repulsion at the dogmatic intolerance of the seventeenth century religious mind, but before we judge we have to imagine ourselves in possession of the one truth of God, with all the beauty and felicity of eternal life on one hand and all the terrors of eternal damnation on the other It is an interesting subject of speculation for the humane and the social-minded among us As for the more detached and sceptical and easy-going, their time was not yet come

The difficulty was that the seventeenth century Church of England had inherited the fruits of a past in which a thousand ardors and political necessities had been forcibly compromised Time had been able to harden the molds of those compromises but not to quench the fire of the flaming enthusiasms that had been poured into them If literary students may be permitted to evade the classic disputes as to continuity and succession, we may for our purposes regard the English Church as beginning in a series of more or less accidental and opportunistic changes that culminated in the Act of Supremacy of 1534 The result of these changes was a church which probably nobody in the world today would recognize Henry VIII had no idea of altering dogma or ritual He wanted to be supreme with all the sources of power in his own hands The motives of that passion for power have been disputed, the fact seems unquestioned And modern writers are not disposed to spend much time rationalizing or spiritualizing that fact

It may be seriously questioned whether Henry VIII fully realized the magnitude of the changes which he was setting in motion It is certain that very few of his contemporaries did Thomas More, in the event so sure of the issues that he went cheerfully to the block for his conviction, seems to have taken a considerable time to think the matter through Rome seems to have been singularly slow in rousing to alarm The martyrology of Henry's reign

is the most imposing in English history, but it has been given comparatively little publicity Perhaps it was too impartial, too spasmodically animated by religious principle to make good capital for any religious party except the Catholics, who were soon to pass out of the main stream of the forces that molded Anglo-Saxon opinion But on the whole Henry seems to have carried his people along with him

So far as we can see, those aspects of the religious life of the time which lay closest to the daily life of the people he left in the main undisturbed In matters religious the English, like most people, have shown themselves conservative in everything that actually impinges on the everyday consciousness The most striking exception to this general principle, the elimination of the monasteries, which had played a very intimate part in the lives of the people, is easily to be explained. In the first place, the hold of monasticism upon public opinion had been undermined No informed person today believes the traditional tales about the viciousness and the futility of monastic life in England, but it is clear that the religious impulse which had given monasticism its inner power and its external prestige among people inaccessible to its spiritual attractions was spent It could and did inspire individual loyalty and heroism of the finest type, such as that of the abbots and monks who laid down their lives for the trust which they believed they were bound to defend But clearly, a very large number of the residents of the monasteries were not the stuff of which martyrs are made, and, what is still more important, the ideal of the monastic life had very little power over the imagination of the general public

On the whole, the English Church seems to have been caught by the changes of Henry VIII at a moment very awkward for the perpetuation of the established order. In the first place, the long-needed reform which Wolsey had put off and which his successors were beginning to push with moderation had progressed far enough to shake confidence in the existing order and not far enough to make it proof against assault As all the reformers were to experience in their turn, the spirit of reform is a very difficult thing to control if one desires to keep it from slipping into revolution And there is much to suggest that while the Englishman has

not been suspicious of his priests, has indeed given abundant evidence of respect for them, he has not on the whole been prone to rush passionately to their defence, and this has been demonstrated not only in the case of the Catholic but of the Anglican and the Dissenting clergy as well. Attacks on the cleric seem in general to have been less resented than attacks on the layman, which is perhaps one reason why Marian public opinion revolted against the fires of Smithfield, and Elizabethan public opinion acquiesced in the hangings of Tyburn.

Moreover, the changes made by Henry VIII offered a very substantial material bonus to the lay as against the clerical element in the society of his time. The abolition of the monasteries enriched a whole new nobility and gave them an interest in the prevention of a return to the old order. Then too, the elimination of the mitred abbots from the Upper House of Parliament gave to this ambitious new nobility a predominance of power over the spiritual lords. Henry's desire of power was by no means unique. It would have taken an attachment to abstract religious principle none too common in the best of times to have withstood the solid temptations of the new order. And once it was established, every consideration of material interest bound a large number of the most energetic and ambitious and powerful of the realm to its preservation.

Finally, there was one aspect of the new order that undeniably commended itself to the nation at large, and that was its elimination of extra-national control. For centuries that had been a point of strain and dispute. It is inconceivable that sooner or later the rising tide of national pride and national jealousy of any outside interference would not have put the relation of England to the rest of Christendom to the test. The theory of international relations was as abstract then as now and quite as unapparent to the everyday lay consciousness. The political entanglements of the sixteenth century papacy were such as to make it even obscurer. It is not surprising therefore that Henry's nationalistic battle-cry should awaken an answering sympathy in the nation at large, and that, fortified by the experience of the Spanish marriage of Mary, Elizabeth should convert that response into one of the great na-

tional enthusiasms of her time At this point Henry VIII was building on sure ground

The Reformation in England under Henry VIII was then in the main political Henry had the sound English feeling that having gone as far as he wished to go, he had gone as far as anybody should go, and that anybody who wanted to go farther was seeking to pass the limits set up by God and right reason With thoroughly sincere and consistent moral and religious earnestness he set his face against the doctrinal and ceremonial innovations with which the time swarmed Unfortunately for Henry and for the large number of those leaders of the Church of England who, without any tolerance for Henry himself, have shared what seems to have been his point of view, it was easier to cut the lines that bound the Church of England to the rest of the Church than to swing the Church of England clear of the changes that were agitating the rest of Christendom

In sober fact Henry had opened the gates to the Protestant Reformers, whom he loathed, and upon his death and the accession of the boy heir, Edward VI, they saw their chance and took it, strong in the conviction that they were carrying out the as yet unrealized purpose of God for the Church of England Under the regime of the Protector Somerset, idealistic and tolerant, a very rare combination in sixteenth century politics, and under the domination of the thoroughly unscrupulous and ambitious Northumberland, the Protestant party made rapid headway England had early in Edward's reign become an asylum for exiles from the Continent. In 1550 some five thousand of these were allowed by royal letters patent to be organized into the Protestant Church of the Strangers, in London, an organization which, it is said, the King and Council desired to see developed into a working model for a more extensive church reformation in the future.[1] The organization of this church suggests strong Calvinistic tendencies, and it is significant that in 1551 the Superintendent, John à Lasco, was made one of the Royal Commissioners for the revision of ecclesiastical law[2] Certain it is that it became a center of propaganda Moreover, some eighty circuit preachers were

[1] A H Drysdale, *History of the Presbyterians in England Their Rise, Decline and Revival* (London, 1889), pp 44-45

[2] *Ibid*, p 48

licensed about the same time, to evangelize in different parts of the kingdom[3] In other words the reign of Edward VI sees a definitely concerted and organized Protestant propaganda One other instrument of the propagation of Protestantism should be noticed here, and that is the fact that Cranmer's efforts to make the reading of the Bible in English universal, by, for instance, ordering that a copy of the Bible should be made accessible in every parish church, had from the reign of Henry VIII increased the unrestricted reading of the Bible in the vernacular and therefore prepared the ground for the general acceptance of the central Protestant position that from its pages each man might get his religion for himself.

The result is that by the end of the reign of Edward VI the scattered elements of Protestantism latent in England from the time of Wycliffe and the Lollards had not only been revived but had also been brought into touch with continental Protestantism and made self-conscious In this period England, usually lagging a little behind the Continent in development of thought, became familiar with the pattern of a Protestant reformation, and that hope was born with which we meet so frequently in the later sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, of a really thorough-going reformation, such as those of Wittenberg and Geneva.

Again it is impossible to make any estimate of numbers; but the probability is that these Protestant elements, while constantly growing in strength and aggressiveness, were still very much of a minority, and that the bulk of the people, even of the pious and godly, were still devoted to the old order Had Edward VI lived, and had his strongly marked Puritanism ripened with a mature development of his power, it is likely that this would soon have been tested out, and that the extreme Protestants would have had to learn the lesson that Gardiner and Bonner were later to learn, of just how much the English people would tolerate in the way of religious persecution But Edward's death brought the intensely Catholic Mary to the throne, and her passion for the immediate undoing of her father's and her brother's work, her fanatical loyalty to principle and to what she conceived to be her duty—noc a characteristic Tudor fault—led her to persecute Protestant com-

[3] *Ibid*, p 62

mon folk as well as leaders to such an extent as to awaken lasting suspicion of the mercy of the order she was trying to reconstitute. At the same time her Spanish marriage and her devotion to its political interests aroused in her subjects an equally strong suspicion of the unpatriotic political implications of her point of view The result was that her reign served, so far as the development of the English Church was concerned, to furnish anti-popery with its strongest weapons of horror and distrust, and to intensify the outraged nationalism and fear of foreign domination of her people Even so the caution with which Elizabeth proceeded in the first months of her reign suggests that the specific Protestantism of the temper of the country was by no means self-evident

Had Elizabeth been minded to continue the Marian establishment without wholesale persecution and with the nationalistic ardor that characterized her reign, it is more than likely that she could have succeeded so far as English public opinion was concerned But the political necessities of the position of Anne Boleyn's daughter and her Tudor love of wielding all the potentialities of her power for herself made this impossible She therefore decided with a good deal of political sagacity to resume her father's settlement, carrying it beyond his provisions as the changes of the times demanded It seems clear that Queen Elizabeth herself liked splendor and pomp in religious service It seems clear, too, that she had little taste for supernaturalism and probably very little religious passion of any sort What she wanted was to be master in her own chapel as in her own house She was disposed to yield neither to bishop nor to presbyter any of the power so congenial to her dominating temperament By actual experience, when her own life had been in danger in her sister's reign, she had learned the strength of the English sentiment for duly established legal form, and the effectiveness of public opinion. She was therefore in every way suited for the achievement of that astute and statesmanlike masterpiece of compromise known as the Elizabethan Settlement.

It is difficult to sum up briefly the Elizabethan Settlement because it involved not only the three staples of any religious organization, dogma, ritual or ceremony, and government, but also that far subtler thing, temper or spirit On the side of ceremony

Elizabeth seems to have been desirous of keeping the general aspect of church and service unchanged She was shrewd enough to see that it is the cult aspect of religion which seizes upon the affections of a people, and that it is in that field that innovations are most resented because they disturb the warm dependences and intimacies of long and settled use The churches must have been swept of most of their adornments early in the operations of the commissioners of Henry VIII So there was probably not much left for the idol-hunting proclivities of some of the sixteenth century Protestants. For service, the Mass had been swept away in the region of Edward, but many of the ancient prayers, with Protestant adaptations and setting and arrangement, had been preserved in the English of the Second Prayer Book of Edward VI, and this, with minor changes, Elizabeth kept For church government she took her father's plan She kept as against the rising Presbyterians and Puritans the episcopal system of government with its superior advantages for discipline and control of organization, and she took ingenious pains to observe every form of law in the consecration of her first archbishop, Parker She did not renew the Act of Supremacy, but the first act of her reign styles her "the only Supreme Governor of this realm as well in all spiritual and ecclesiastical things or causes as temporal," and Parker speedily discovered that no womanly modesty or prudence made her hesitate to let him know who was to be master

In all of these things Elizabeth was careful not to offend the conservative tastes and habits of the great bulk of her subjects At the same time the Catholics were restrained so effectually that by 1559 Catholic rites could be celebrated only by stealth By 1563 the Catholic party had been hemmed in by penalties that should have led to its gradual elimination Elizabeth and her ministers were shrewd enough to concentrate on the priest in their efforts to eliminate that wing of the Elizabethan Church, and while Catholic lay folk suffered and occasionally sharply, this concentration of attention on the clergy did much to avoid that popular sympathy with suffering for conscience that had arisen under Mary. Left to themselves, it is very doubtful if the Catholic secular priests in England could have maintained themselves even as underground agitators, but the founding of seminaries abroad,

beginning with that of Douai in 1568, made possible the recruiting of fresh and more resolute and skilful priests, and the vigorous attack upon the *status quo* that followed the founding of the English Mission constituted an enthusiastic Catholic propaganda, which in the hands of men who had been trained to martyrdom made a deep impression upon the English consciousness Though definitely outlawed, "popery" came to be one of the bugaboos of popular Protestantism in England, and its reprobation one of the fixed points of agreement among all parties Nothing is more revealing of certain aspects of seventeenth century religious psychology than the influence, indirect and intermittent though it was, which this suppressed group exerted upon the consciousness of their time and the optimism that made its harassed and defeated members look forward not merely to tolerance but even to the possibility of a restoration of their ideal of the Church of England through a century of vicissitude and defeat

At the same time that the Elizabethan Settlement eliminated the Catholic point of view, it also ruled out the Presbyterian and those points of view that we may roughly lump together under the name of Anabaptist For it definitely set up, as against the Anabaptists, a state church into which all citizens were in effect herded willy-nilly, regardless of their fitness for the professions and responsibilities of church life As against the Presbyterians, it maintained the hierarchic conception of church government. And it made hardly any provision for that intimate direction and supervision of the religious life of its individual members that the Presbyterian sought in his Discipline Here again, the Elizabethan Settlement definitely ruled out the conceptions of some of its most convinced and active members, and again the eliminated refused, as we shall see, to be counted out, but set to work to achieve the transformation of the national church to their ideal Most of these men quite agreed with the authors of the Settlement as to the necessity of national uniformity, but they differed as to the content of that uniformity

Something of the same sort of comprehension and exclusion appears in the doctrinal settlement represented in the Thirty-nine Articles, agreed upon by the archbishops and the bishops of the land in the Convocation at London in 156⅔ As against the Re-

cusants, the Thirty-nine Articles take a definite stand on the main Protestant positions The sixth article affirms the "Sufficiency of the holy Scriptures for salvation," and the twentieth sets up Scripture as the test of church authority So too on the great issues of Faith and Works and Free Will and Election, the Elizabethan Settlement took its stand with orthodox Lutheranism and Calvinism The tenth article, "Of Free Will", declares

> The condition of man after the fall of Adam is such, that he cannot turn and prepare himself by his own natural strength and good works, to faith and calling upon God, wherefore we have no power to do good works pleasant and acceptable to God, without the grace of God by Christ preventing us, that we may have a good will, and working with us, when we have that good will[4]

The eleventh, twelfth, and thirteenth articles repudiate all saving merit in works The eleventh also approves Justification by Faith as "a most wholesome doctrine, and very full of comfort" The seventeenth article adopts and explains at some length Predestination and Election With orthodox Protestantism, the Articles reduce the sacraments to two Transubstantiation is expressly denied, and the Mass rejected with decorous expressions of reprobation for fables and deceits So far the Thirty-nine Articles align the English Church with the confessional Protestantism of the Continent

With equal firmness they erect solid barriers against unorthodox Protestantism and the Inner Light They affirm the Trinity at length against the Unitarians, and in the fifteenth and sixteenth articles they insist that Christ alone is free of sin, and they specifically hold up for condemnation those who claim that they can no more sin Lay ministry is excluded in the twenty-third article, the communism of some of the Anabaptists in the thirty-eighth, while the thirty-ninth anticipates the Quakers via the Anabapists by explicitly sanctioning the taking of oaths when a magistrate requires All of these things are expressly within the field of orthodox confessional Protestantism But two at least of the Articles transcend the sixteenth century in the delicacy and vagueness of their compromise, and those two articles may be said to contain the germs of fully half the subsequent controversy within the Church of Eng-

[4] Citations are from the 1571 English translation of the Latin of 1563, as printed in *The Text of the Thirty-Nine Articles of 1553, 1563, 1571,* ed W M M[eredith] (London, 1889)

land. The more famous is the twenty-eighth article, which rejects Transubstantiation on the one side and the purely commemorative Lord's Supper on the other. The fruits of that distinction were not to be seen till the nineteenth century So, for our purposes, the thirty-fourth, entitled, "Of the Traditions of the Church," is the more important It is worth quoting at length, because it brings vividly before us the mind of these men, as does none of the other articles

> It is not necessary that traditions and ceremonies be in all places one or utterly like, for at all times they have been divers, and may be changed, according to the diversity of countries, times, and men's manners, so that nothing be ordained against God's word Whosoever through his private judgment, willingly and purposely doth openly break the traditions and ceremonies of the Church, which be not repugnant to the word of God, and be ordained and approved by common authority, ought to be rebuked openly (that other[s] may fear to do the like) as he that offendeth against the common order of the Church, and hurteth the authority of the Magistrate, and woundeth the consciences of the weak brethren
>
> Every particular or national Church, hath authority to ordain, change, and abolish ceremonies or rites of the Church ordained only by man's authority, so that all things be done to edifying.

This was to be Laud's charter against the Puritans

Such was the Elizabethan Settlement on the dogmatic side, and such was the spirit of its approach to the problems of the time It shows a certain tenderness for history at a time when most Protestants were inclined to end church history with the Apostles, a certain instinct for form as a matter of taste and symbol when so many looked upon it as a purely legalistic issue beset with the ancient ghosts of idolatry and Old Testament horror of superstition, and a certain craving for leeway in the unending task of working out the precepts of divine revelation in this too mortal world. Viewed impartially, there is a suggestion of genuine moderation as well as compromise in this statesmanlike caution, but one cannot blame the Presbyterian or the Independent if, strong in his conviction of the necessity of returning to what he conceived to be the one order of Apostolic days, he saw in a passage such as this only a cowardly and luxurious clinging to the flesh-pots of Egypt, or condemn the Recusant who found in such a passage only a sentimental dallying on the edge of the Protestant abyss

When the seventeenth century opened, it inherited this settlement It also inherited those elements which the settlement had been designed to compose, but the discordance of which the passage of time since its adoption had only served to aggravate Those elements may be regarded as summed up in the great religious parties or groups which carried over unassimilated from the sixteenth to the seventeenth century From one angle the story of the English Church in the seventeenth century is the story of the efforts of these groups to realize their ideal reformation of the Church of England or, where they found themselves hopelessly in a minority, to secure their place in the ecclesiastical sun

The first of these to seem to succeed was the Presbyterian party. Drysdale, the historian of the Presbyterians, defines the essential features of Presbyterianism as follows

> I The parity of preaching Pastors, or Presbyters, who are the presiding Bishops of the Church, with no higher order over them by divine right
>
> II Church government and administration to be in the hands of a body, or council, or senate of elders and office-bearers [all election to office to be in the hands of the people]
>
> III Organic Union, or the right, duty, and privilege of different Churches or bodies of the faithful to associate together in organic union, so as to cultivate and manifest an esprit de corps or interest in the separate Churches' well-being at large, and secure the benefits of the union that is strength [5]

A Guide unto Sion, "written by a learned and judicious Divine" and first published in 1638, is a little more particular than Drysdale on one or two of these points in a way that illuminates the development of the Presbyterian movement in the seventeenth century. Particularly significant is the author's definition of the true Church. "The true Church is a people called of God by the Gospell, from the world, unto the Communion or fellowship of his son Jesus Christ, in whom they are coupled and built together, to be the habitation of God by the Spirit "[6] It was because of this Calvinistic conception of the earnest and devoted character of the true church that the Presbyterians laid so much stress on the matter of discipline, for clearly only a carefully selected and con-

[5] Drysdale, *op cit*, pp 6-7

[6] *A Guide unto Sion, Or Certaine Positions, Concerning a true visible Church Wherein the nature of a true Church is sd plainely described, as all men may easily discerne the same from false Assemblies Written by a learned and judicious Divine* (2nd ed; Amsterdam, 1639), pp 7-8

stantly disciplined body of church members could achieve such an ideal The ordinary English parish of the time, in which men of all degrees of religious enlightenment and of none were herded to the yearly Communion by legal prescription, could hardly satisfy any very strenuous conception of a chosen group separated from the world

Richard Baxter has left a lively and entertaining account of the manner in which he and some of his colleagues went about the realization of the Presbyterian ideal in the years of his ministry at Kidderminster, before Presbyterianism was officially established.

> All the Ministers Associate agreed together, to practice so much Discipline, as the Episcopal [sic], Presbyterians and Independants were agreed on, that Presbyters might and must do And we told the People that we went not about to gather a new Church, but taking the Parish for the Church, unless they were unwilling to own their own Membership, we resolved to exercise that Discipline with all Only because there are some Papists and Familists or Infidels among us, and because in these times of Liberty we cannot (nor desire to) compel any against their Wills, we desired all that did own their Membership in this Parish Church, and take us for their Pastors, to give in their Names, or any other way signifie that they do so, and those that are not willing to be Members, and rather choose to withdraw themselves than live under Discipline, to be silent And so, for very fear of Discipline, all the Parish kept off except about Six hundred, when there were in all above Sixteen hundred at Age to be Communicants Yet because it was their own doing, and they knew they might come in when they would, they were quiet in their Separation, for we took them for the Separatists[7]

We have no record of the transaction from the point of view of the thousand who were clearly not chosen spirits, but their position suggests one reason why the Presbyterian victory of the early days of the Civil War was to prove so short-lived

Yet the venture apparently throve from the point of view of the six hundred Baxtor is modest about his part in its success, for he goes to some pains to enumerate the peculiar advantages which he had enjoyed in this parish The fifteenth of the list is typical

> And it was a great Advantage to me, that my Neighbours were of such a Trade as allowed them time enough to read or talk of holy Things For the Town liveth upon the Weaving of *Kidderminster* Stuffs, and as they stand in their Loom they can set a Book before them, or edifie one another whereas

[7] *Reliquiae Baxterianae or, Mr Richard Baxter's Narrative of the most Memorable Passages of his Life and Times Faithfully Publish'd from his own Original Manuscript* by Matthew Sylvester (London, 1696), p 91

Plowmen, and many others, are so wearied or continually employed, either in the Labours or the Cares of their Callings, that it is a great Impediment to their Salvation, Free-holders and Trades-men are the Strength of Religion and Civility in the Land and Gentlemen and Beggers, and Servile Tenants, are the Strength of Iniquity (Though among these sorts there are some also that are good and just, as among the other there are many bad) And their constant Converse and Traffick with London doth much promote Civility and Piety among Tradesmen [8]

But the passion for a church-membership that really meant something in godliness of life and fervor of piety was not the sole passion of the Presbyterians Their earliest conflict with their neighbors in the Church of England concerned something far different, namely, that issue of form and ceremony that in one shape or another has periodically vexed the English Church It seems on the surface a very little thing To the modern mind the disputes of the seventeenth century as to whether the communion table should be set altarwise at the east end of the church or tucked away in a corner of the building until needed for the actual administration of the Lord's Supper, especially when all parties were agreed that any effort to reenact the sacrifice of the Mass was blasphemous idolatry, may well seem a battle over nothing In sober truth, however, fundamental issues of the first importance lurk behind these questions of what the uninformed modern is too prone to dismiss lightly as mere matter of form A lively, quite unsympathetic but in no way violent Recusant skit of the period sums up the situation thus

> Foure bretheren were bred at once
> Without flesh, bloud, or bones
> One with a beard, but two had none,
> The fourth had but halfe one [9]

The first, Thomas Harrap goes on to explain, is Lutheranism, the second Calvinism, the third Anabaptism, and the fourth, Anglicanism

What the light-hearted Catholic, who assumed that since the Protestants had abandoned the dogmas that gave the ceremonies significance, the ceremonies themselves could hardly be

[8] *Ibid*, p 89

[9] *Tessaradelphus, Or the foure Brothers*, etc, collected and translated by Thomas Harrap ([n p] 1616), from the title-page

taken too seriously, did not entirely grasp was that at that moment the two beardless were struggling for the domination of the institution which the half-bearded were convinced they had ordered as it should be ordered Perhaps of all the incompatibles which the Anglican Church sought to reconcile, here was the most tenacious and the most thorough-going, for the difference between the man who loves beauty of religious ceremony and finds in it the richest expression and satisfaction of his most ineffable aspirations, and the man who can see in such ceremony at best only superfluous ornament and distraction and who seeks his satisfaction in the naked and unadorned setting forth of his prayer and his praise under conditions that as closely as possible conserve the physical circumstances of the everyday, is one of the most fundamental distinctions in the temperament and orientation of human nature itself. The man who prefers the barest, most halting words of his own composition for the expression of his prayer is at the opposite pole from the man who craves the most beautiful words he can find for the feeling which ever transcends them with some accent and exuberance of feeling all his own It takes a very spacious and infinitely ductile and elastic religious structure to hold both And the religious structures which the early seventeenth century was rearing were not of that type.

The Marian exiles in Frankfort and Geneva had had experience of the kind of plain and godly religious service and religious life which they craved. Fresh from the inspiration of Calvin and Knox, they returned to the compromises of the Elizabethan Settlement Their first insuperable stumbling block was the vestments which the Church of England required of them in place of the plain Geneva gown Knox had crystallized their distaste for these costumes of the past in his well-known condemnation of "such garments as idolaters in time of blindness have used in their idolatry"[10] A famous Dean of our own day has been known to refer to the modern form of the vestments as "ecclesiastical millinery." Such flippancy was impossible for those who in the seventeenth century were trying to build the sort of church which Christ had intended. The result was the Vestiarian Controversy of 1564 and the first Presbyterian Separation of 1566, when a

[10] Quoted, Drysdale, *op cit*, p 103

group of ardent men left the Church of England to avoid the "idolatrous gear" and to use the Geneva book which "the great Mr Calvin had approved of, and which was free from the superstitions of the English service."[11] The foreign leaders of the Presbyterians, Knox and Beza, thought this separation impolitic, but, as it was, enough of the party remained within the English Church to carry on for the next half century and more an unremitting fight against "reading", as they contemptuously described the conducting of the prescribed services of the church in the forms of the Book of Edward VI, against the sign of the cross in baptism, against kneeling for the reception of the Communion, against all the practices of the time designed to secure greater solemnity and beauty of religious observance It was a spirited fight in which both sides gave and took hard blows To read Puritan records one would think that all of the moderate clergy of the Church of England were ignorant and idolatrous loafers, whose morals and whose intelligence might be fairly gauged by the slavishness with which they clung to the superstitious parroting of their book, and the obstinacy with which they refused to gather in their junketing and pleasure-loving flocks for the serious enterprise of the Discipline. To read some of the Church accounts, one would conclude that the Puritans were a narrow-minded, beauty-hating band of iconoclasts, who set their hats on the altar and stiffly refused to bend their arrogant joints even for the Communion, and profaned and desecrated every vestige of decent order and reverent grace their idolatry-crazed eyes could discover. Most modern students draw their conclusions consciously or unconsciously according to those fundamental predilections of temperament suggested above

One thing more should be said of the Presbyterians, and that is that beyond all these conflicts of taste and point of view, they brought to the making of the religious life of their time a coherent and aggressive ethic, which came to exert an influence far beyond the limits of the six hundred who submitted to the discipline and in no small measure to shape and define the most effective Protestant elements within the Church of England for some time to

[11] *Ibid*, p 104

come Troeltsch goes to the centre of this ethic in his definition of Protestant asceticism.

> It is, like Calvinism as a whole, active and aggressive, desires to re-shape the world to the glory of God, and make the reprobate bow submissively to the Divine law, and will with all diligence create and maintain a Christian commonwealth To this end it rationalises and disciplines, in its ethical theory and Church-disciplinary instruction, the whole of action It restricts more and more closely the range of the things left by Calvin as *adiaphora* for the uses of recreation, anathematises as creature-worship every tendency to value earthly things as ends in themselves, but nevertheless demands the systematic use of all possibilities of action which are capable of contributing to the progress and well-being of the Christian commonwealth [12]

The energy engendered by such a view of the world and of their mission in it could not fail to bring the Presbyterians to the fore, and when their short-lived victory was taken from them, that view yet survived as a force of inestimable importance in the national life

The Presbyterians were the first of the Puritans or the Precisians to make themselves felt in the land, but they were by no means the only Puritans, and in the Civil War they were to lose their victory to men who at first seemed to have even less chance of success than they. These were the Independents, in the beginning hard to distinguish from the Presbyterians Like the Presbyterians they objected to the Elizabethan Settlement because it fell short of the Genevan ideal of a complete reformation, and like the Presbyterians they bitterly denounced the tyranny of the bishops who held, often with severity, the lines of that settlement Like the Presbyterians the Independents sought plainness of worship and that godly discipline that would ensure purity of church membership. So far they were in the main traditions of Calvinism. But the Independents, unlike the Presbyterians, drew also from other sources than Calvinism, some of them more ancient even than the Reformation They were influenced by that great number of loosely knit and exceedingly diverse Protestant bodies known to history as the Anabaptists In many of their ideas they display striking resemblances to some of the obscurer sects of heretics who every so often in later mediaeval history bub-

[12] Ernst Troeltsch, *Protestantism and Progress*, trans W Montgomery (London and New York, 1912), pp 83-84.

ble suddenly to the surface to be grimly repressed or to disappear obscurely in the backwash of the wave that had swept them from the often restless sub-surface of mediaeval life

Apparently, the first of the English Independents to formulate the theories of English Independency and publish them to the world was Robert Browne, who in 1581 formed out of the English Protestants at Middleburgh in Holland a church on his own plan. In 1582 he published *A book which sheweth the life and manners of all true christians* This work lays down five principles which may be taken as the foundation of English Independency The first is that Christ is the sole head of the Church The second is that every individual congregation is a free church, to be governed in complete independence by itself The third principle is a sort of corollary to this, namely, that church government by the civil power, as in the English Church, is the realization of the kingdom of anti-Christ. The fourth seems a little mild after this typically sixteenth century blast of anathema, but it is even more radical in its import It is that the office of teaching or guiding the members of the church is committed by God to those who have the gifts for such a calling And the fifth is downright revolutionary—the people of the congregation are the proper judges of these gifts, and the election of their minister is their right and their duty [13]

In 1585 Browne *itinerated,* that is, travelled in England spreading these for the time utterly subversive doctrines At first his followers contented themselves, as so many new movements in the Church of England have done, with merely holding supplementary religious meetings, probably somewhat in the manner of the early Methodists But Browne was followed by others who persuaded those to whom such doctrines were congenial to separate entirely from the Church of England and form churches of their own, hence the famous name, *Separatist*

It is not surprising that doctrines so completely destructive of all efforts to establish a strong central church government and order should arouse violent opposition, not only from the bishops but from public opinion, even Puritan public opinion Many of the

[13] Robert Barclay, *The Inner Life of the Religious Societies of the Commonwealth, considered principally with reference to the Influence of Church Organization on the Spread of Christianity* (London, 1876), p 36

Separatists were driven therefore to take refuge in Holland, whence so many of their ideas seem to have come in the first place The famous Separatist church at Scrooby, for instance, emigrated to Holland in the years from 1604 to 1606 One member of this group, John Smyth, is said to have been the first to enunciate in England the principle of "complete and perfect religious freedom" [14] Between 1611 and 1612 one Thomas Helwys brought a portion of Smyth's congregation back to London and there founded a church.

The extent to which this group carried the Protestant principles of individual interpretation of Scripture, or, to be exact, the Protestant faith in the ability of the individual to discover for himself the Word of God, is seen in the following passage from the "Last Book of John Smyth" in York Minister Library· "Although it be lawful to pray, preach, and sing out of a book for all penitent persons, yet a man regenerate is above all books and scriptures whatsoever, seeing he hath the Spirit of God within him, which teacheth him the true meaning of the Scriptures, without which Spirit the Scriptures are but a dead letter which is perverted and misconstrued, as we see this day, to contrary ends and senses, and that to bind a regenerate man to a book in prayer, preaching, or singing, is to set the Holy Ghost to School in the one as well as the other."[15] Here is not only an attack upon the book of Common Prayer and upon all church order, but still more significantly, a clear surrender to the Inner Light, that principle which sets up each man as the discoverer of his own religion. It is the same point of view that in times of great emotional and spiritual fervor and general excitement has again and again spread like wild fire with extraordinary consequences for orthodox sanity and order. It is, for example, the root doctrine of the Brethren of the Free Spirit, who ran so hectic a course in mediaeval history.

On the whole the great body of the Independents seem to have held a pretty steady course. But the bars were down, and when the Independents triumphed in the Commonwealth, the consequences of their principles were to be seen in the extraordinary ebullition of enthusiastic sects for which that period is famous

[14] *Ibid*, pp. 53-54

[15] Quoted, *ibid*, p 107

For the most part that story lies outside of our period But again in a very effective way, a particular group dramatizes a tendency in the religious thought of the period, and indirectly, quite beyond all physical weight of power or numbers, exerts an influence upon the life of the time For the enormous importance which Independency attaches to the testimony of the individual consciousness as to its possession of saving knowledge is to be discerned in the thought and method of men who were hardly aware of its existence except to reprobate it

Back of Independency, below it or above it, depending upon the point of view from which one approaches it, lies a whole welter of religious agitation and endeavor, passionately and spasmodically taking shape in various sects that emerge for a time into the spotlight of orthodox horror and reprobation and then succumb or pass over into another movement. Some of the New Thought movements that flourish in our large cities at the present time offer probably not a bad peace-time analogy for these harassed and despised sects of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries

It is not easy to lay hands upon these groups Part of the trouble is of course that they were censored and persecuted, but that is not the main difficulty After all, seventeenth century censorship was not infallible, and there was always the possibility of printing forbidden books in Holland and smuggling them into the channel ports, and even at times the facilities of the wandering and illegal press The real trouble lies in the situation itself. Every group in the seventeenth century is agreed on the existence of these fanatically extreme enthusiastic sects There is an abundance of highly-colored accounts of what they were like, but it is very hard to find anybody to plead guilty to belonging to an enthusiastic sect

Inconvenient as this is, it is not surprising when we remember that in the seventeenth century everything depended on the interpretation of principles and the conclusions drawn from them Moreover, in an age when the one thing that everybody was convinced of, without exception, was that he had hold of the only truth, it is not likely that anybody would plead guilty to a charge which the most extreme seem to have joined with the most moder-

ate in detesting, that is, "Enthusiasm" Such power inheres in the ideal of a time

One group, however, seems to have exposed itself pretty thoroughly in this period, so it may serve as a type of the more elusive majority. It is the Family of Love, also known as the Seekers, though it seems likely that the Family was but one group of Seekers It has been suggested that the Seekers come out of those mysterious groups of concealed mystics and lovers of mystical religion that in the time of Tauler seem to have been fairly widespread in the Rhineland under the name of the Friends of God[16] The particular group known in England as the Family of Love, or the Familists, was founded by Henry Niclaes or Nicholas, a Westphalian born in 1502 Between 1541 and 1590 he formed his followers into a secret society. They seem to have attended either Protestant or Catholic services with composure, holding that the important thing was to have Christ living in one's person, and that he in whom Christ dwelt could use or disuse these rites and ceremonies as he chose That in itself in that world of sharply marked distinctions was enough to give scandal, but worse was to come For the Familists rejected Luther and the Reformation, and grounded their whole teaching on revelations delivered to their leader and founder While somewhat incoherent and not a little wearying, the account of these revelations which is put into the mouth of Henry Nicholas himself in the English version of *The Prophetie of the Spirit of Loue* printed in 1574 is worth quoting at some length as an example of a phenomenon by no means rare in the Inner Light groups:

> The Lorde! the God of Heaven! moued Mee, in his Minde, or Spirit, his Powre incompassed Mee, with a Russhing-noyse and the glorie of y^e same God of Heauen, became great in my Spirit of his Loue in such-wise/ that y^e great Cleernes of God whollye inuironed Mee/ and shone rounde-about-mee Wher-through the Sight of myne Eyes, became cleerer than Chrystall, and myne Vnderstanding, brighter then the Sunne in such-sort/ that I insawe with myne Eyes, the great Long-suffering of God and how lardge the same extended ouer the Children of Men and perceaued, with myne Vnderstanding, the Breakinge-fourth of the greate Daye of the righteous Iudgment of God vpon the Earth with which Breaking-fourth of the-same great Daye, God wil also now in the last tyme, as a Reuenger against all his Enemies, make-vpp himself

[16] *Ibid*, p 174

and appeere/ and iudg the vniuersall Earth with Righteousnes/ accordinge to his Promises the Beeing of God gaue-fourth hys Sounde and Voyce and spake vnto Mee H N, through his Spirit of Loue, all these Woordes/ and sayde

6 Go now out/ and byde alwayes in Mee and, going-before with thy Seruice, er-euer the Cleernes of the great Daye of my righteous Iudgment do com, let the Sounde of yᵉ Voyce of my gratious Woorde passe-fourth, ouer the vniuersall Earth Shewe all People, my Will declare my Lawes/ Ordinaunces/ or Institutions, to the Vnderstandingones forbeare not any lenger the Transgressinge of Men nether wynke thou hence-fourth at the Offences of any People but make-manifest their Vnrighteousnes vnto them and correct or reprooue them, for all their Ignoraunce/ Blockishnes/ Self-seeking/ and Hypocrisie/ and for all their Lying-imagination of the Knowledg/ wherwith they geeue-fourth themselues before thee, as-though I approoued their cause in which doeinge, they all make-manifest their false Righteousnes before Mee/ and bringe their Filthynes before my Face/ makinge themselues eauenso to an Abhomination before myne Eyes[17]

And so the Lord is made to run on for some pages still

After such a passage as this it is not difficult to believe what the many enemies of the Family of Love found to say of its principles There is a rich literature of this sect in English, so it is possible to get a fair idea of their beliefs from their own point of view On the whole, while some of their writings are more lucid than the foregoing, they bear out its main tendencies very well. The preface of the *Mirabilia opera Dei,* written professedly by "Tobias a Fellow Elder with H N. in the Houshold of Love," and from all appearances published well into the next century, sets forth the orthodox claims of the Inner Light even more forcibly in the following warning

Therefore take warning by this declaration of mine, all ye people which love the truth of *Jesus Christ,* that you in no wise oppose neither the gracious Word of God, nor his Chosen servant *H N* because God the Father with his Son *Jesus Christ,* dwelleth and liveth perfectly in *H N* in the heavenly being, and hath anointed him with the holy Spirit of God and of *Jesus Christ,* and that no man without the fellowship of *H N* or without the obedience of the requiring of his doctrine, can be brought or gathered to the true living God, nor to his Sonne *Jesus Christ,* nor united with the same good being[18]

[17] *The Prophetie of the Spirit of Loue Set-fourth by H N And by Him perused a new / and more distinctlie declared, translated out of Base almayne into English* [by C Vitell] ([Amsterdam?] 1574), pp 3 4

[18] *Mirabilia Opera Dei Certaine wonderfull Works of God which hapned to H N even from his youth and how the God of Heaven hath united himself with him, and raised up his gracious Word in him, and how he hath chosen and sent him to be a Minister of his gracious Word, Published by Tobias a Fellow Elder with H N in the Houshold of Love, translated out of Base Almain* ([Amsterdam? n d]), sig A_2

According to one I R [John Rogers], the author of one of those horrific exposures in which the time took such delight, a good many Englishmen had gone over to Flanders to see H N,[19] and by the time of this writing, 1578, his English followers had grown to such numbers that "in many shires of this our countrie, there are meetings & conuenticles of this familie of loue, & into what number they are grown, my hart reweth to speake, that which one of the same societie did auouch to me for truth"[20] A severe proclamation against these books and people who circulated them was issued on October 9, 1580[21] But in spite of a good deal of attention from magistrates they seem to have held their own into the Commonwealth, publishing various expositions of their views and defences against the attacks of their enemies even as late as 1656[22]

To judge from some of the attacks made upon them, attacks that seem warranted by the implications of their own statements, these Seekers fell into the same difficulties that their mediaeval predecessors had encountered in the field of ethics, teaching in some degree the sinlessness of the godly, with all its alarming implications An age that had committed itself to the doctrine that salvation is only through the merits of Jesus was peculiarly exposed to misinterpretation if the safeguards which it had thrown around that dogma were disregarded, and many of the religious leaders of the time were aware of the danger. In 1631 and 1632 one Richard Lane, a tailor, and Joan, his wife, were questioned in the Court of High Commission for holding blasphemous opin-

[19] J[ohn] R[ogers], *The Displaying of an horrible secte of grosse and wicked Heretiques, naming themselues the Familie of Loue, with the liues of their Authors, and what doctrine they teach in corners Whereunto is annexed a confession of certain Articles, which was made by two of the Familie of Loue, being examined before a Justice of Peace, the 28 of May 1561 touching their errours taught amongest them at their assemblies* (London, 1578), sig B_4^v

[20] *Ibid*, sig A_3^v

[21] *Queen Elizabeth and her Times, A Series of Original Letters, Selected from the unedited Private Correspondence of the Lord Treasurer Burghley*, ed Thomas Wright (London, 1838), II, 153

[22] *An Apology for the Service of Love, and the People that own it, commonly called, The Family of Love Being a plain, but groundly Discourse, about the Right and True Christian Religion Set forth Dialogue wise between the Citizen, the Countreyman, and an Exile as the same was presented to the High Court of Parliament, in the time of Queen Elizabeth and penned by one of her Majesties menial servants, who was in no small esteem with Her, for his known wisdom and godliness*

With another short Confession of their Faith, made by the same people And finally some Notes & Collections, gathered by a private hand out of H N upon, or concerning the eight Beatitudes (London, 1656)

ions that seem to be associated with these of the Family of Love. For on the third article of the inquiry, "That you Richard and Joane doe hould that a Christian in this world is as absolutely perfect as Christ Jesus himselfe," Richard is reported to have said "that he houldeth the beleiver is not soe righteous and perfect in himself, but is soe accepted for perfect by God through Christ Jesus "[23]

According to the record, "Sir Henry Martin moveth that this man be not presently let goe but be sent to Bridewell till the last day in Court of this terme, and thinkes by that tyme he will be lesse perfect "[24] But Sir Henry's pious hope was not realized, for we find that in February of 1632, "Richard Lane was sent to Bridewell againe for falling into speeches as bad as his former "[25] Nor was this an isolated case, for before the year was out four others had been questioned for views of the same general character,[26] the last a vicar in the Church of England [27]

We have dwelt at some length on the Family of Love because it represents a minor but convinced and extremely energetic element in the religious movements of the time, and because it demonstrates the reality of that threat of Enthusiasm which so much exercised the minds of all parties in this period It proves that when John Donne or Richard Baxter inveighed against the dangers of Enthusiasm, they were not fighting windmills, or, as the student of eighteenth century religion is likely to suppose, trying to stifle all freshness of inspiration and intensity of feeling At some of its central positions seventeenth century Protestantism in all its branches lay exposed to very serious difficulties That these difficulties passed the sphere of academic possibility and constituted at times a real if not widespread menace is proved by the Family of Love

As was suggested at the opening of the chapter, this struggle of the religious parties and of the conflicting elements in the heritage of the Church of England which they represented is only one

[23] *Reports of Cases in the Courts of Star Chamber and High Commission*, ed Samuel Rawson Gardiner (London, 1886), p 191

[24] *Ibid*, p 194

[25] *Ibid*, p 269

[26] *Ibid*, pp 270-271, pp 313-314

[27] *Ibid*, pp 316-321

side of the story of that institution in the first half of the seventeenth century It is a colorful and even an heroic story to a degree which this bare summary can hardly suggest, and the political consequences of it, here entirely disregarded as irrelevant to the study of the religious literature of the time, were momentous, but after all while each of these parties made a contribution directly or indirectly of lasting importance to the institution within which they fought, none of them came to dominate it The outcome like the beginning was to be a conservative compromise in which very different elements were to be held together in a bond of practical moderation, not elastic enough to prevent successive secessions of strong conviction, not fervent enough to hold some of the most ardent spirits it nurtured, but sober and sincere and durable enough to become one of the most characteristic expressions of the national genius

Regarded from the point of view of the central core, the history of these years of conflict is also a story of development, not from every point of view steady, but persistent and enriching For the leaders of the moderate conservatives not only fought to preserve what they conceived to be the truth against the constant assaults of all parties, but they from the very first addressed themselves to the task of building up a church After all, they enjoyed the advantage of having their fundamental principles accepted at least to the extent that they could salvage some of their energies from the struggles of the time and devote them to the arduous enterprise of making a church out of a political compromise, The story of how they did that is one of the most interesting in the history of the time, and, in its consequences for English literature, one of the most important.

The first steps, in many respects the most important, had been taken before the opening of this period Probably the first was Crammer's order that a copy of the English Bible should be chained in every parish church The second, but the first that can be considered distinctively Anglican, was the publication in 1549 of the First Prayer Book of Edward VI This Book was soon republished with more Protestant changes that made it substantially the Book of Common Prayer of the present day While dictated by the dominant necessities of compromise, this book created something or-

ganic, a spiritual reality, what the French would call the *cult* of the English Church The Thirty-nine Articles, the fruit of the same spirit of compromise, charted the intellectual field of the Church and established for the great central body of the Church a core of acceptances which freed energy for other distinctively religious activities besides the definition of dogma This intellectual foundation, laid by the Convocation of 1562/3, was the first step in rationalizing the fruits of half-religious, half-political necessity and expediency The work of building about the bare skeleton of dogmatic confession the full-blooded body of an intellectual structure, of a theology, was soon completed by Richard Hooker, who gave to the world the first four books of his *Of the Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity* in 1594 In purpose and intent, a defence of the more conservative conception of the Church of England against the attacks of the Puritans, this exposition of the fundamental principles on which the English Church is grounded, in fact accomplished a far wider and more lasting achievement, for it gave the Anglican Church its philosophy and its theology, its intellectual justification Opinions will always differ as to the logical consistency or exactness of Hooker's position, but there can be no question of the statesmanlike competence with which he laid down and made good his point of view For breadth of view and for independence of judgment it is hard to overestimate Hooker, for he seems to have had the ability to transcend the theological confines of the thought of his age and to take on various highly controversial matters a view far broader than was generally possible for the men of his time The twentieth century Anglican will find in these pages a point of view more like his own with regard to Predestination or the part of Tradition in church history than he will find in any other work of the time

In a way the most significant thing about this very remarkable book is the spirit in which it is conceived and executed The name which it earned Hooker at the bar of history is well-known, the *Judicious* Hooker It is judicious in a high degree It is not passionate or exalted, it is temperate, reasonable in tone, in its general proceeding sensible to an eminent degree If Hooker could not set the tone and temper for all the Anglican writing of the time, he

did set the tone and temper for much of the more purely intellectual and speculative writing of his church

The work begun by Hooker was carried on in one sense by the host of Anglican controversialists who defended what was substantially Hooker's position against Rome and Geneva But in a far more enduring and significant fashion it was taken up by the great preachers and devotional writers of the period following, by Andrewes, Donne, Baxter, and Jeremy Taylor, and, as we shall see, by a host of lesser men, who wrote for the guidance of patron or flock books of direction and of devotion that came to exercise no small degree of influence on the devotional life of the time What the ecclesiastical statesmen of Elizabeth's time had done for the polity and for the cult of the English Church these men did for its inner spirit, and in that sense they may be counted among the makers of the Anglican tradition

Inevitably, the Reformation of the Protestant leaders had been concerned with the establishment of points of view, of theories, that would permit them to develop a religious life along their own lines. The Catholic Reformation, or the Counter-Reformation, as it is more generally known, was of course concerned very passionately with the refutation of these theories and dogmas and the reassertion of the ancient theories and dogmas that had been impugned by the Protestant leaders, but in the nature of things when it came to the working out of the Counter-Reformation, the fact that the Catholic reformers were working along lines of belief and theory long established and accepted, even if too often neglected, made possible a concentration on the technique of devotional life and the individual realization of devotional patterns that would not have been possible to the same degree for men who were fighting often for the bare survival of their religious premises. It would be false to the facts to exaggerate unduly these divergences of tendency, but there is much to suggest their existence One has only to compare Richard Baxter's accounts of his methods of religious inspiration and direction with, say, the books of Saint Francis de Sales to sense a world of difference in atmosphere and approach between two men of rare religious ardor and genius The efflorescence of religious confraternity life in Italy, the extraordinary wealth and variety of Spanish mysticism in the years im-

mediately following the launching of the Counter-Reformation, the charm and personal richness of that movement in French life which the Abbé Brémond has so vividly described in his *L'Humanisme Dévot* are evidences of the epoch-making breadth and fullness of this development and this release of the inner life of the old church This resurgence of Catholicism is profoundly affected by many of the same influences that shaped the Protestantism of the time, for instance the revival of asceticism It often in surprising places takes much the same direction that Protestantism had taken or was taking But in its inner pulse and direction it is very different.

It is not surprising that some of the effects of the Counter-Reformation were felt by the English Church, poised as it was in so many things mid-way between Rome and Geneva Indeed, a fairly good case might be made out for the thesis that the history of what is sometimes mistakenly called the High Church group of the seventeenth century belongs more to the Catholic than to the Protestant Reformation Only it would be necessary to remember that in the religious life of the seventeenth century nothing happens in a water-tight compartment However obscure or unpopular the source of a new impulse, it presently has transpired far beyond the narrow limits of its place of origin, in quarters that repudiate every known association with its origins Nowhere is this fact more apparent than in the literature of devotion, which is the subject of this essay.

In more ways than is commonly suspected the seventeenth century English Church faced problems not dissimilar to those of its more conservative neighbor on the Continent The Renaissance had come late to England, with the result that England was experiencing the full impact of its worldliness at a time when leaders of the new religious order were still full of their pristine enthusiasm The modern reader looking back upon the seventeenth century from the ground of the scepticisms and the paganisms of the present day is apt to think of the seventeenth century as a period when the religious had it quite their own way In a good many matters and in a good many ways they did, but we have abundant evidence in the literature of the time, particularly in the more popular forms like the drama and the broadside and in the writings of

such speculative spirits as Sir Walter Raleigh, that the godly of the seventeenth century were by no means immune to the perennial trials of the godly in this world, that there was quite enough indifference, irreverence, and scoffing to remind them that their kingdom was not of this earth, and that if there was not enough articulate and aggressive scepticism to make any inroads on their own confidence, there was quite enough to make them realize that they must watch their way narrowly

Finally, any victory however imposing must have seemed somewhat illusory when the victors tried to gather their spiritual spoils from the indifference, the inertia, the constitutional aversion to change, that characterized the moderation of the great mass of the people Those who believed in a church of the saints could take comfort from the fact that in any age the number of the saints will have definite limits and could find a source of added challenge and stimulus in the unworthiness of the world, but those who were committed, like the Presbyterians, to the enterprise of making all the nation saints, or, like the moderate Anglicans, to the obligation of making some provision for the varying tastes and needs of often very unspiritual people were confronted with the tepidity of the ordinary man as an enduring fact very chastening to the optimism of faith In other words, the religious leaders of the seventeenth century were face to face with the fact that it is relatively easy in a world of men with some taste for novelty and for banner-bearing to gather a party for the propagation of almost any religious pattern, but that to keep that party to the steady grind of realization of that pattern is a very different matter It was a long and arduous contest with the weaknesses of human nature on which each of these parties had embarked, and it was being played out in a crowded and by no means sympathetic arena.

CHAPTER II

The Development of the Devotional Life of the Time

Part of this effort to convert the members of one's own group naturally took the form of an endeavor to make sure that all understood the principles to which they were committed. The Protestant theory of knowledge, though generally held with some of that indifference to logic popularly supposed to be characteristic of the English mind, was one of the determining factors in this propaganda, for it rested on the conviction that if men really knew the truth, they would act in accordance with it. This is probably responsible for more of the theological literature of the time than is usually realized.

But the strong ethical preoccupation that is one of the most obvious consequences of the English talent for practical affairs led to the devotion of a good deal of attention to the direct cultivation of the ethical life itself. Points of conduct loom very large in all the preaching and writing of the time. And this is particularly interesting because the theory that personal conduct had any direct bearing upon the main purposes of religion would seem at first sight to have been eliminated in the fundamental premises of the religious thought of the time. This point is worth examining in some detail, because the refinements, the modifications, which the English churchmen wrought in this fundamental matter are not only engaging in themselves but from start to finish illuminating for the psychology of the age.

The English Church in the Thirty-nine Articles stood solemnly committed to the theories of Predestination and Election. God had chosen who was to be saved and by logical implication, though this pole of the matter seems to have been insisted upon only for the purpose of imbuing the elect with a becoming sense of their own good fortune, had chosen who was to be lost. Salvation was ac-

complished for the elect not by any merit or deserving of their own, but by the sole and inexplicable fiat of God Such a theory would seem to eliminate effectually all individual moral exertion The fact is that it did not Some of the most sustained moral endeavor that the world has ever seen was carried through by men who would have held that the slightest questioning of the theory of Election was in itself presumption of eternal damnation

Officially the Church of England clung steadfastly to the Calvinistic theories of Predestination and Election throughout this period For instance, the English Church sent delegates to the Synod of Dort, where in 1618 all the "Reformed" or Calvinistic Protestant bodies rallied to the defence of the Confessions against the assaults of the various Free Will theories, lumped together for the purposes of opprobrium under the name of Arminianism, from the name of the Dutch theologian Arminius, who seems to have been responsible for the most effective propaganda for Free Will that had been made in the Protestant bodies Among the three main resolutions which Parliament passed in 1629, was one against "Popery, or Arminianism, or heterodoxy" That single sheet of June 19, 1649 which offered "A Perfect Cure for Atheists, Papists, Arminians, and all other Rebels and Traytors, both against Church and State," was in the best tradition of the time in lumping all these undesirables together in one vast opprobrium [1] For, to borrow the words of Sir Francis Knollys to Lord Burghley in 1580, "all of these are free-wyll men and justiciaries or justifiers of themselves "[2]

But while the Church of England officially stood firm on this cornerstone of sixteenth century Protestantism, in actual practice some of her most influential leaders were making what amounted to a virtual modification of the whole of what the eleventh of the Thirty-nine Articles had praised as a "most wholesome doctrine, and very full of comfort" Barclay, the historian of the religious societies of the Commonwealth, dates this tendency, which he considers important enough to warrant the name of a new party in the Church of the time, from the publication of Hooker's

[1] *A Perfect Cure for Atheists, Papists, Arminians, and all other Rebels and Traytors, both against Church and State* (London, June 19, 1649), *Single Sheets, Mar 11-Nov 26, 1649* (in the British Museum), No 44

[2] *Queen Elizabeth and her Times*, II, 153

Of the Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity in 1594[3] Certainly, it may be found fully matured in the sermons of John Donne, who became Dean of Saint Paul's in 1621, and since Donne was the most renowned preacher of his day in the city of London, his example is of the first importance

The problem was no small one. For both Puritan and High Churchman of that day the foundation of all religious life was Justification by Faith He who believes, who has faith, will not be lost, so ran the promise of Predestination The gift of faith was the evidence of the believer's election The majority of men today are so accustomed to look upon Predestination from the angle of those who were not elected to salvation that it is hard for most of us to appreciate at its full value the fact that Predestination was for the men of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries a doctrine of comfort and hope That "prayer conteyning the sum and effecte of this Catechisme" which Edward Dering inserted in his famous *Shorte Catechisme for Househoulders* presents very vividly the consolation and encouragement which this tenet brought to the spirit burdened with a sense of sin

> O Mercifull and heauenlye Father, for so much as at euery lighte occasion, I am drawen from thy holy lawes, to the vanities of this life, and vnto all sinne and wickednesse I beseeche thee in mercye sette before myne eyes alwaies the rememberaunce of thy iudgement seate and my last ende whereby I may be dailye stirred vppe to consider in what great daunger I stande, through the horrible punishment due to my sinnes, that dayly groning vnder the burthen of them I may flye for succoure to thy beloued Son Iesus Christe, who hath fully payde, suffered and ouercome the punishmente due to them, and through the working of thy holy spirite in me I may[be] fully assured in my soule and conscience, that the curse, condemnation and death which these my sinnes deserue, is fully payde, suffered and ouer come in Christ, that his righteousnes obedience, and holinesse is mine, and what soeuer he hath wroughte for mans saluation is wholly mine.[4]

On the other hand, failure of faith aroused a suspicion of whether or not one was of the elect In some groups, particularly in Puritan groups, this consciousness of the possession of faith, this inner certainty of being of God's elect, was insisted upon with such literalness and fervor that it of necessity became a grave problem

[3] Barclay, *op cit*, pp 55-56

[4] Edward Dering, *A Shorte Catechisme for Househoulders With prayers to the same adioyning* (London, 1582), sigs C_7^v-C_8

of the inner life, with sometimes almost tragic results Indeed, that failure of certainty which nowadays we should be disposed to regard as an evidence of sensitiveness and discrimination could and did become in that age a grave scandal A perhaps unusually dramatic but certainly in no way untypical example is to be found in an account appended to two funeral sermons which were published in London in 1602 The nature of this account may be fairly gauged from the title. *A Brief Discourse of the Christian Life and Death, of Mistris Katherin Brettergh, late wife of Master William Brettergh, of Bretterghoult, in the Countie of Lancaster Gentleman, who departed this world the last of May 1601.* Even more revealing is the sub-title "With the manner of a bitter conflict she had with Satan, and blessed conquest of Christ, before her death, to the great glorie of God, and comfort of all beholders." And beneath this sub-title is set the text of the book "Micha 7.8 *Reioyce not against me, O mine enemies though I fall, I shall rise againe And when I sit in darkenes, the Lord shall be a light vnto me* Psal 37 37 *Marke the vpright man, and behold the iust for the end of that man is peace*"

Behind these texts lies a very dramatic story Apparently, when Katherine Brettergh knew she was to die, she was seized with the fear that she was to be damned Such a fear was not uncommon in those days, but none the less distressing for her family and friends They seem to have rallied around her and done everything possible to reassure her; but in vain Then they sent for the minister, but without effect Apparently, he called in some of his colleagues in the neighborhood, for there seems to have been a veritable consultation of clerical experts over the sick-bed of Mistris Brettergh, who must have been a young woman of a good deal of tenacity of character to have withstood such a massed assault of faith Under the best of circumstances this failure of the faith would have been distressing and somewhat embarrassing, but in Lancashire, from Elizabethan days a stronghold of Recusancy, it was a calamity For if we can believe the account of the very lively "Post-script to Papists" with which the book opens,

they did not hesitate to draw very uncharitable conclusions from Mistris Brettergh's troubles

> But now touching the death of this Gentlewoman, whereat some of your Romish faction haue bragged, as though an oracle had come from heauen to proue you Catholicks, and vs Hereticks Blessed be God, and our Lord Iesus Christ, the Diuell and you are all deceiued, and God, euen our mightie Iehouah, hath you in derision, and shall laugh you to skorne, who hath not only frustrate your fond expectations, but made your follie manifest to all men This Gentlewomans life being more holie, and her death more comfortable, then possiblie any of yours can bee, so long as you continue Papists [5]

Happily, Katherin's despair yielded just before her death, and to borrow the words of her chronicler

> For the space of fiue houres together at the least, she continued praysing and lawding the Lord, with such a gladsome and heauenly countenance, testifying such inward ioy, from a comfortable feeling of the mercies of God in her soule, and using such sweete sentences, and sugred phrases of perfect and holy eloquence, as the truth therof, if it could have been taken, were admirable, continuing so many houres together [6]

To judge from the account, this was not only a great consolation for Katherin and her distressed friends but also a neighborhood triumph for the Lord and the forces of truth and righteousness This account of 1602 was quite obviously written by one of the two clergymen who preached her funeral sermons, William Harrison, who had also attended her in her illness With the memory of his share in the triumph of her end before him as he wrote, it is not surprising that he should rise nobly to the height of his subject in the following peroration "This was the death of that vertuous Gentlewoman, happily dying in the Lord, and reaping the benefit of a holie profession wherein wee cannot but acknowledge and reuerence the mercie of God, who in our greatest infirmitie makes his grace to shine most cleerely A sure testimonie of the truth of our profession, seruing to incourage us therein, and to mooue vs to a godly life "[7] This little drama must often have been played in those days of Predestination and Election and Justification by

[5] [William Harrison,] *A Brief Discourse of the Christian Life and Death, of Mistris Katherin Brettergh,* printed with *Deaths Aduantage Little Regarded, and the soules solace against sorrow*, (2nd ed , London, 1602), sigs N_2^v-N_3

[6] *Ibid* , pp 28-29

[7] *Ibid* , p 37

Faith alone, sometimes with a less happy ending, and often, no doubt, with an audience as malicious as the Papists of Lancashire

And even in days of health and strength the conscientious must often have asked himself whether or not he really were saved John Donne, that self-tortured, strangely-divided soul, certainly did, and the fruit of his asking is to be read in one of the most moving passages to be found in the sermons of his day

That God should let my soule fall out of his hand, into a bottomlesse pit, and roll an unremoveable stone upon it, and leave it to that which it finds there, (and it shall finde that there, which it never imagined, till it came thither) and never thinke more of that soule, never have more to doe with it That of that providence of God, that studies the life of every weed, and worme, and ant, and spider, and toad, and viper, there should never, never any beame flow out upon me, that that God, who looked upon me, when I was nothing, and called me when I was not, as though I had been, out of the womb and depth of darknesse, will not looke upon me now, when, though a miserable, and a banished, and a damned creature, yet I am his creature still, and contribute something to his glory, even in my damnation, that that God, who hath often looked upon me in my foulest uncleannesse, and when I had shut out the eye of the day, the Sunne, and the eye of the night, the Taper, and the eyes of all the world, with curtaines and windowes and doores, did yet see me, and see me in mercy, by making me see that he saw me, and sometimes brought me to a present remorse, and (for that time) to a forbearing of that sinne, should so turne himselfe from me, to his glorious Saints and Angels, as that no Saint nor Angel, nor Christ Jesus himselfe, should ever pray him to looke towards me, never remember him, that such a soule there is, that that God, who hath so often said to my soule, *Quare morieris?* Why wilt thou die? and so often sworne to my soule, *Vivit Dominus,* As the Lord liveth, I would not have thee die, but live, will nether let me dye, nor let me live, but dye an everlasting life, and live an everlasting death, that that God, who, when he could not get into me, by standing, and knocking, by his ordinary meanes of entring, by his Word, his mercies, hath applied his judgements, and hath shaked the house, this body, with agues and palsies, and set this house on fire, with fevers and calentures, and frighted the Master of the house, my soule, with horrors, and heavy apprehensions, and so made an entrance into me, That that God should frustrate all his owne purposes and practises upon me, and leave me, and cast me away, as though I had cost him nothing, that this God at last, should let this soule goe away, as a smoake, as a vapour, as a bubble, and that then this soule cannot be a smoake, a vapour, nor a bubble, but must lie in darknesse, as long as the Lord of light is light it selfe, and never sparke of that light reach to my soule, What Tophet is not Paradise, what Brimstone is not Amber, what gnashing is not a comfort, what gnawing of the worme is not a tickling, what torment is not a marriage bed to this damnation, to be secluded eternally, eternally, eternally from the sight of

God? Especially to us, for as the perpetuall losse of that is most heavy, with which we have been best acquainted, and to which wee have been most accustomed, so shall this damnation, which consists in the losse of the sight and presence of God, be heavier to us then others, because God hath so graciously, and so evidently, and so diversly appeared to us, in his pillar of fire, in the light of prosperity, and in the pillar of the Cloud, in hiding himselfe for a while from us, we that have seene him in all the parts of this Commission, in his Word, in his Sacraments, and in good example, and not beleeved, shall be further removed from his sight, in the next world, then they to whom he never appeared in this But *Vincenti & credenti*, to him that beleeves aright, and overcomes all tentations to a wrong beliefe, God shall give the accomplishment of fulnesse, and fulnesse of joy, and joy rooted in glory, and glory established in eternity, and this eternity is God; To him that beleeves and overcomes, God shall give himselfe in an everlasting presence and fruition, Amen [8]

This is the seventeenth century version of the soul's progress from despair to certainty, recounted by a man of genius who seems to have had more than even the genius's wonted consciousness of himself as a unique and irreplaceable individual in the great scheme of the universe But John Donne, even after all the spiritual struggle he must have passed through in his change from the Catholic to the Anglican position and in his sacrifice of the worldly career to which no small or inconsiderable part of his nature inclined him for the at first less congenial vocation of the church, was not content to rest in that dearly-bought assurance. When in one of his sermons on All Saints' Day he dwelt on how the elect enter into the Communion of Saints, he summed up the requirements for that salvation in the four words · *Beliefe, Profession, Works,* and *Practise* [9] To that easy-going arrogance which sometimes must have been found among the less reflective of the saved, Donne addressed the following warning "Deceive not your selves then, with that new charme and flattery of the soule, That if once you can say to your selves, you have faith, you need no more, or that you shall alwaies keep that alive "[10] To those who wearied of the stress of the moral conflict he gave the following reminder: "Ecce scalam, Behold the life of a Christian is a *Iacobs Ladder,* and till we come up to God, still there are more steps to be made, more

[8] John Donne, *Eighty Sermons* (London, 1640), No LXXVI, pp 776-777
[9] *Ibid*, No XLV, p 456
[10] *Ibid*, No LXXX, p 819

way to bee gone "[11] And with that touch of poetry never far from his most earnest preachments he summed up the life of the aspiring Christian in a fresh adaptation of the New Testament parable

> Heaven is not to be had in exchange for an Hospital, or a Chantry, or a Colledge erected in thy last will It is not onely the selling all we have that must buy that pearl, which represents the kingdome of Heaven, The giving of all that we have to the poor, at our death, will not do it, the pearl must be sought, and found before, in an even and constant course of Sanctification, we must be thrifty in all our life, or we shall be too poor for that purchase "[12]

So within the stern bounds of Predestination these men of the last decades of the sixteenth and the first decades of the seventeenth centuries developed the mighty energies of the moral life And where so often their more strictly Calvinist brethren turned their moral energies to the imposition of the will of God upon an unregenerate world, these men turned them in upon the boundless fields of self-conquest The result is a concentration upon the inner life in the intimately personal sense that is the mainspring of devotion

But even while they devoted so much attention to the inner life of the devout, men of a moderate and conservative temper like Donne were not a little exercised to keep this development within range of objective and impersonal criteria, for the ecstacies of the inner life have their own peculiar perils, a fact of which, as we have seen, the world about them afforded abundant evidence The result was an attention to the practical inspiration and direction of the inner life that may in itself be said to constitute a new chapter in the history of the Church of England Here those tendencies which, as has been suggested above, recall the Catholic as well as the Protestant Reformation become most apparent

It would be a mistake to infer from the foregoing that this development was the exclusive possession of any one party in the Church of England It is true that in the nature of things the Discipline of the Presbyterians was much concerned with social offences, yet this does not mean that the Presbyterian leaders were content with a religious life that was defined wholly in community terms and directed exclusively to considerations of action In

[11] *Ibid.*, No XLIII, p 427

[12] John Donne, *Twenty-six Sermons* (London, 1660-1661), No XI, p 158

a very interesting treatise on pastoral duty and pastoral opportunity which Richard Baxter drew up for his fellow-ministers assembled at Worcester in December of 1655, we find much stress laid upon the necessity of personal religious work with the individual parishioner It is true that this is for our purpose a pretty late date, being in fact well out of the period we are studying, and it is also true that the counsel which Baxter offers is definitely presented in the form of exhortation to much-needed reform But the way in which Baxter presents his point of view suggests that these are no tentative suggestions but the conclusions of long-matured reflection and of considerable practical experience Even if this treatise be taken literally as a call to long-overdue reform, it is significant, for it shows the direction in which the Presbyterian party in the person of their greatest spiritual leader turned their faces when they seemed at last to have the power to realize their ideal

In this book Baxter begins his admonitions in very plain terms:

> It is the duty of the Minister not only to teach the people committed to his charge in publike, but *Privately* and *Particularly* to admonish, exhort, reprove and comfort them upon all seasonable occasions, so far as his time, strength, and personal safety will permit He is to admonish them in time of health to prepare for death And for that purpose, they are often to confer with their Minister about the estate of their souls, etc [13]

Baxter is not content merely to point out a duty but goes on to furnish a practical plan for the minister's making "a prudent enquiry" into the states of his parishioners' souls Characteristically, this begins with a modest apology on the minister's part:

> Now though I have no desire needlessly to pry into any mans secrets, yet because that it is the office of Ministers to give advice to a people in the matters of salvation, and because it is so dangerous a matter to be mistaken, where life or death everlasting doth lie upon it, I would intreate you to deal truly and tell me, Whether ever you found this great change upon your own heart or not? Did you ever find the spirit of God by the word, come in upon your understanding, with a new heavenly life, which hath made you a new creature? The Lord that seeth your heart doth know whether it be so or not Therefore I pray you, see that you speak the truth [14]

[13] Richard Baxter, *Gildas Salvianus, the Reformed Pastor Shewing the nature of the Pastoral Work Especially in Private Instruction and Catechizing*, etc (London, 1656), from the "Preface to the ministers," sig A_7

[14] *Ibid*, p 437

There is in this method of procedure something bald and forthright that must have been rather trying for the shy and sensitive, though here as in so many human things use and wont must have wrought their customary ameliorations. On the whole, the group to which Donne belonged would seem to have proceeded somewhat more indirectly. But the concern was much the same, and so was the purpose.

Fortunately, we have in funeral sermons and commemorative volumes some very lively accounts of the patterns of life which the pious, usually under the direction or with the advice of some godly minister, followed to victory in this period. In spite of an occasional stiffness of effect these make rather good reading of their sort. The teller of the story is usually anxious to drive home the moral of the good example, but not for the most part to such a degree as to spoil the telling. As a rule, the seventeenth century had very good taste in such matters, neither sentimental nor apologetic. In all probability, their experience in giving and taking admonitions was in some degree responsible for the grace with which they managed this rather delicate business.

In spite of the suspicion which Protestantism had cast upon works of pure piety, we find them strongly reinstated among the really devout. Letice, Lady Falkland, was an ardent church-goer, if we may judge from the following words of her own:

> Now I misse those opportunities I had at Court, and at the Cathedral Church, either of those places afforded publik Prayers thrice every day, and Lectures also on the week days, Nay it is not here so well with me as it was when you and I lived together in that Country village, where the good Parson had *Morning and Evening Prayer* in the Parish church, *twice* a day continually, where I now live we have this advantage of publik Prayer, onely on the Lords day, and its Eve, and on Holy-days, & their Eve's, and on Wednesdays and Fridays, our wonted Letany days.[15]

Lady Falkland was evidently addicted to the Book of Common Prayer and the ritual of the Established Church. Mrs Dorothy Hanbury, wife to Edward Hanbury, Esquire, may be suspected of not being so enthusiastic about the established ritual, for Samuel Ainsworth reports in her eulogy, as almost the crowning evi-

[15] [J Duncon,] *The Returnes of Spiritual comfort and grief in A Devout Soul Represented (by entercourse of Letters) to the Right Honourable, the Lady Letice, Vi-Countess Falkland, in her Life time And Exemplified in the holy Life and Death of the said Honourable Lady*, etc (London, 1648), pp 3-4

dence of her piety, the fact that "most resolute she was against superstition her spirit would rise against those cursed innovations, which of late were introduced and obtruded upon men"[16] But in the same paragraph we learn also that

she was much acquainted with the duties of Religion, frequent in the worship and service of God, Prayer was her morning draught, and evening dainties, she spent much time every day in reading the Scriptures, and the pious books of godly men, she was carefull to improve opportunities put into her hands for the hearing of Gods Word, even upon the week-day

The outward form such devotion would take naturally varied from group to group, but the inward impulse was the same whether it took a lady to prayers in the cathedral twice a day, or to the morning lecture, or the Sunday sermon

Psalm-singing was another pious activity apparently common to all parties but the Recusants Indeed, Thomas Harrap, the Catholic collector and translator of the *Tessaradelphus,* finds in psalm-singing one of the most effective enticements of Protestantism

There is nothing that hath drawne multitudes to be of their Sects so much, as the singing of their psalmes, in such variable and delightfull tunes These the souldier singeth in warre, the artizans at their worke, wenches spinning and sewing, apprentises in their shoppes, and wayfaring men in their trauaile, litle knowing (God wotte) what a serpent lyeth hidden vnder these sweete flowers[17]

Even the ribald amused themselves by singing psalms "mixed in with profane ballads", if we may believe the protests of godly contemporaries Certainly there is an abundance of evidence for the popularity of psalm-singing among the religiously-inclined Lady Danvers is hardly to be called a Puritan, but Donne tells us that she "her selfe, with her whole family did, euery Sabbath, shut up the day, at night, with a generall, with a cheerful *singing of Psalmes,* This *Act of cheerfulnesse,* was still the last *Act* of that Family, vnited in it selfe, and with *God*"[18] And the spiritual ad-

[16] Samuel Ainsworth, *A Sermon Preached at the Funerall of that religious Gentlewoman Mris Dorothy Hanbury, Wife to Edward Hanbury Esq living at Kelmarsh in Northampton-shire who dyed the 12 day of June, and was buried at Navesby in Northampton shire July 13 Anno Dom 1642* (London, 1645), p 28

[17] *Tesseradelphus,* sig D_2^v

[18] John Donne, *A Sermon of Commemoration of the Lady Danuers* (London, 1627), p 133

viser of the Lady Falkland recommends to her that she enliven her lengthy devotions by singing of spiritual songs, "both with voice, and instrument" and backs up his advice with a couple of references to Old Testament history wherein she might read of "greater matters, helped forward (to say the least) with Musick, and Instruments"[19] Such musical piety must have been a welcome diversion in the often drab routine of the godly of the time

Fasting was another of the weapons of seventeenth century piety, one high in public esteem, for the proclamation of a fast was a recognized way of meeting a public disaster like a fire or a flood In the history of Nicholas Ferrar we read much of the watching at Little Gidding Not only did the members of the family take their turns in these watches but on the eve of the Civil War various members of the University of Cambridge, among them the poet Crashaw, used to ride over to take part in them, too The monastic aspects of the community life at Little Gidding, where the whole Ferrar family under the leadership of Nicholas, one of the religious geniuses of the time, had devoted themselves to a retired life of pious observance and good works, were so remarkable for this period that it is unwise to generalize from any of the observances of this particular community. But it is interesting to note the recrudescence of a feature of religious life that had played so large a part in the observance of the Middle Ages

Extraordinary as it was, Little Gidding was not the only instance of a revival of interest in the monastic ideal Letice, Lady Falkland, seems to have been moved independently by somewhat the same impulse, for we read that on her husband's death, "*she* addresses *her self* to a *Divine* of great *eminency* for *piety,* and *learning,* and from *him she* takes directions for a more strict course of life in this *her Widowhood,* then formerly"[20] Under the direction of this eminent divine Lady Falkland embarked on a distinguished career of good works, finding employment for the unemployed on her estate at considerable expense to herself, erecting a school for children "where they were to be taught both to

[19] [Duncon,] *The Returns of Spiritual comfort,* p 22

[20] [J Duncon,] *A Letter conteining Many remarkable passages In the most holy Life & Death of the late Lady, Letice, Vi-Countes, Falkland,* etc, printed with *The Returnes of Spiritual comfort,* etc (London, 1648), p 152

read, and to work,"[21] and on "holy days" going among her poor neighbors to instruct them and to read improving books to them [22] "In her *house*," proceeds her admiring biographer,

> in her *retinue*, and at her *table*, and otherwise, she denies her self *state* (which her quality might have excused) that (with *Dorcas* the *Widow*) she might be *ful* of *good works*, and more *delight* she takes to see her *revenues* now spent among a crowd of *Almes-men* and *women* at her *dore*, then by a *throng* of *Servants* in her *house* [23]

Indeed, such was the fervor of the Lady Falkland in this retirement devoted to good works that her thoughts came to take the direction which Ferrar's had taken

> But that *magnificent*, and most *religious contrivement*, that there might be *places* for the *education of young Gentlewomen*, & for retirement of *Widows*, (as *Colleges* and the *Inns* of *Court* and *Chancery* are for *men*) in several *parts* of the *Kingdom*, This, was much in her *thoughts*, hoping therby that *learning* and *religion* might flourish more in *her own Sex*, then heretofore, having such opportunities to *serve* the *Lord, without distraction* [24]

It is a pity that the increasing evil of the times (from the point of view of her party) made this dream impossible of realization, for we might have had three hundred years' evidence as to what women might accomplish with masculine opportunities for study and reflection

But interesting as these monastic tendencies are, they constitute after all but a minor phenomenon in the life of the time The most significant contribution of the monastically inclined was their concentration on good works and the life of devotion, not only in the church-going but still more in what we might call the closet sense Lady Falkland usually spent about an hour with her maids in the morning, praying with them and catechising them and instructing them, but she spent even more time in her own private devotions, in prayer and in meditation [25] And this was equally true of the Puritan worthies of this time or a little later whose exemplary merits Richard Baxter was to chronicle so enthusiastically in various funeral sermons It is here that the centre of this

[21] *Ibid*, p 153
[22] *Ibid*, pp 164-165
[23] *Ibid*, p 172
[24] *Ibid*, p 191
[25] *Ibid*, p 162

movement to deepen the inner life may be found, and it is here that there originated the demand for the vast output of devotional literature which we are about to study

To begin with, there seems at first to have been some dearth of Protestant devotional literature in England When, for instance, in 1585 the Jesuit Robert Parsons wanted to deliver a controversial coup de grace to the irrepressible Anglican, Edmund Bunny, it took this form, "But here I would demande of M. Buny in sinceritie where or when, any of his religion did either make or set forthe (of them selues) any one treatise of this kinde of subiect? I meane, of deuotion, pietie and contemplation?"[26] And Parsons followed up his question with a list of a few of the more noted devotional books in circulation on his side, including both classics and books of the day

This question and its answer for his own side, needless to say were not such as to make Robert Parsons any more popular in England. They certainly were not tactful But Sir Edwin Sandys said very much the same thing in a work which he prefaced with a letter to John Whitgift, Archbishop of Canterbury Sandys is discussing, in particular, the state of the religious life of Catholic countries, especially Italy. He says

> For bookes of Prayers and Pietie, all Countries are full of them at this day in theyr owne language, both to stop in part the out-cry of theyr adversaries against them for emprisoning the people wholly in those darke deuotions, and especially to win the loue of the world unto them by this more inward and liuely shew of true sanctitie and godlinesse Yea herein they conceiue to haue so surpassed theyr opposites that they forbear not to reproach unto them theyr pouertie, weaknesse and coldnesse in that kind as being forced to take the Catholicks books to supply therein Which as on this side it cannot be altogether denyed to be true, so on the other side it had greatly beene to bee wished, that those bookes of Christian Resolution and exercise had beene the fruits of the Consciences rather than of the witts of those that made them, (which in some of them, as Parsons by name, to haue bene otherwise besides the rest of his actions unsutable to those Resolutions, some of the more zealous also in their way haue not forborne to confesse.) that by perfourming of so good works with a good mind, to a good end, and conforming their owne liues and demeanours accordingly they might haue pre-

[26] Robert Parsons, *A Christian Directorie guiding Men to their Saluation Diuided into three Bookes The first whereof appertaining to Resolution, is only contained in this volume, deuided into two partes, and set forth now againe with many corrections, and additions by the Authour himself, with reprofe of the corrupt and falsified edition of the booke lately published by Mr Edm Bunny*, etc ([n p] 1585), fol 9

pared mens minds to an hope of a thorough reconciliation, whereas now by using holinesse it selfe for a meere instrument of practices, and to win men to their partie, they cannot but driue the world into such a labyrinth of perplexities and jealousies, as to suspect always their policies and despaire of their honesties [27]

Sandys could find some consolation for his stout-hearted Protestantism in the characteristic reflection on the fundamental shortcomings of Rome, but the fact that Rome was so much more richly supplied with books of devotion than they long remained a standing challenge to loyal Anglicans Even in 1626 Daniel Featley, the author of the *Ancilla Pietatis Or, the Hand-Maid to Priuate Deuotion,* explains in his preface to the reader that in the matter of devotional writings "the Romanists for the most part exceed in bulke, but our Diuines in weight The Church of *Rome* (like *Leah*) is more fruitfull, but her Deuotions (like *Leah* in this also) are *blear-eyed* with superstition But the mother of our faith (like *Rachel*) is not altogether so fruitfull, yet she is more comely, and beautiful, and I hope will be also hereafter as fruitfull"[28] As we shall see, this hope of a richer growth of devotional literature had been realized in no small measure even at the time Featley was writing, but the sense of the greater wealth of Rome in this field and the fear of the lure of her treasures persisted long It was to be felt again with peculiar keenness in the days after the Restoration, when ladies accustomed to the greater elegance and beauty of French devotional literature brought back their French prayer books into the austerer climate of England By that time this literature which we are studying must have seemed a little old-fashioned, for we find Philip Traherne, the brother of the poet, in the year 1685 explaining how he came to write his book of meditations, *The Soul's Communion with her Savior,* on the ground that a Catholic lady of his acquaintance who had been converted to the Anglican Church had felt constrained to abandon the devotional books to which she had been accustomed Therefore,

[27] Sir Edwin Sandys, *Europae Speculum, or, A View or Suruey of the State of Religion in the Westerne parts of the World,* etc ([1st authorized ed ?] Hagae-Comitis, 1629), pp 79-80

[28] Daniel Featley, *Ancilla Pietatis Or, the Hand-Maid to Priuate Deuotion* (2nd ed, London, 1626), sig A_6

that her Soul, in those many hours which she daily allotted for Retirement, might not grow languid and dull in the same act either of Prayer or Reading (as the Body is apt to becom stiff and unweildy if long held to the self same Posture or Motion) these brief Aspirations on the Gospel-History were composed to diversify her Entertainment, and fill up those Intervals which a pious Discretion thought requisit for the better Improvement and more orderly Disposal of the time set apart for such Religious Exercises[29]

At the time when Traherne wrote, a well-informed Protestant divine might have challenged him for ignorance of his own resources, but at the beginning of the century, there was some justification for this complaint of insufficiency. Nothing better shows this than the answer which in 1589 Edmund Bunny returned with proper indignation to Parsons' insulting challenge. It is like many of Bunny's remarks somewhat copious, but it is too revealing not to quote at some length:

It cannot be vnknown to you, but that so many of vs as haue written concerning the institution of a Christian, haue effectually handled that matter [i e devotion] See Caluin theron in his Institutions & Musculus in his Common places (books that cannot be of all others, vnknown to you, & therefore I rather name them) & marke them, whether you find not matter in them, concerning *deuotion, pietie & contemplation,* that you will graunt to haue ouer-reacht your self therin The Scriptures you know do altogither treat of *deuotion, pietie,* etc & these (you cannot denie) are now much more fully expounded, & more seriously by us commended to others, than they are by you without comparison Other places doo more specially treat therof, as the Ten Commandements, & much of Deuteronomie, & namely that song of Moses, the whole books of Iob, the Psalms, Prouerbs, Ecclesiastes, & the song of Salomon, certain places of the Prophets also, but especially of the Euangelists & Apostles, as namely those 3 chapters of S Matth of the sermon of Christ on the mountain, & many others. How say you to M Caluin again upon the Psalmes & in that which he hath done vpon Iob? can you tel vs where to find among your writers, so many good lessons of *deuotion, pietie, etc*? Luther also, in this account, I am sure, you wil grant to be ours And how mightily he beateth downe the estimation of all things in the world, euen of the greatest excellencies in man & how notably he raiseth vp the inner man to those heauenly & eternal things that are in Christ, as in many other places besids, so especially in those his Commentaries on the Epistle to the Galathians, it cannot, or ought not to be so far vnknown to you. The argument of the Epistle to the Hebrews is not of that nature, that it doth so readily yeeld that kind of matter, in the iudgement of most men And yet how notably and fitly doth M Deering in his Lectures theron, in manie places,

[29] P[hilip] Traheron, *The Soul's Communion with her Savior* (London, 1685), Part I, sigs A_8-A_8^v.

so aduance that which is true godlines indeed, that you cannot finde any of those your late maisters that you named, any where to be preferred before him Erasmus also I thinke, pleased you not so wel, that you wil take him for one of yours How say you to his *Enchiridion militis Christiani & de praeparatione ad mortem?* Are these no *treatises of deuotion, pietie, & contemplation?* How say you to those that wrote the *Centuries* Haue they not a special title *De moribus Christianorum?* And can you find nothing therein, that *treateth of deuotion, pietie, and contemplation? Chitrei Regula vitae,* and *De morte & vita aeterna Riuius de consolandis aegotantibus* as also *De stultititia mortalium in procrastinanda correctione vitae The Sicke mans salue* by Thomas Becon *Psychopharmacon Reihnardi Lonchii Hadamarii,* Bradfords most godly & heuenlie meditations, and many others of like matter, are (no doubt) very well knowne vnto you, if you be but of halfe the reading, that you would beare vs in hand that you are but you can find nothing in them, that concerneth *deuotion, pietie, and contemplation* But hereby you declare, what kinde of *deuotion, pietie, and contemplation* it is, that you speake of such as is either grosse idolatrie, or superstition, or at least consisting but onely in such outward exercise as the Apostle setteth aside, and alloweth not to stand for anie part of true deuotion [30]

Bunny's answer is not modest, but even so it does not exaggerate the resources of the English Church of his time If anything, it underestimates them from the point of view of purely devotional literature For instance, Bunny mentions only *The Sicke mannes Salue* of Thomas Becon, saying nothing of *The Pomaunder of Prayer* by the same author, a book which enjoyed a very considerable measure of popularity in the period just before Bunny's writing Again, he does mention with enthusiasm some of Dering's scriptural commentaries, but he says nothing of Dering's *Godly priuate Praiers for housholders to meditate vpon and to say in their famılies,* which first separately and then with Dering's *A Shorte Catechisme for Househoulders* ran through edition after edition from somewhere about 1576 to 1631 Both of these books are notable collections of prayers of the universal provision type so popular at this time

But fine as are both the books which Bunny mentions and those which he forgets, it still remains true that Bunny's England is very much poorer in this type of literature than she had been in

[30] Edmund Bunny, *A Briefe Answer, vnto those idle and friuolous quarrels of R P against the late edition of the Resolution by Edmund Bunny Wherunto are praefixed the booke of Resolution, and the treatise of Pacification, perused and noted in the margent on all such places as are misliked by R P shewing in what Section of this Answer following, those places are handled* (London, 1589) pp 38-40

the first quarter of the sixteenth century or than she was to be in the corresponding period in the seventeenth century

A still more important thing to be noted about these two passages, Parsons' question and Bunny's answer, is that on the whole the two authors take for granted two very different conceptions of what the term *books of devotion* means Or, if we remember that most men do not have any very explicit meaning behind a word which they use, but rather a whole field of connotations and prejudices and tastes and feelings, we may say that two widely different though adjacent fields of meaning lie behind these two passages For Parsons, the field of writing to be labelled "books of devotion" begins with treatises on how to live well and extends into accounts of the supreme mystical experience For Bunny, the field covered by the same general term begins with books of theological definition and commentary and goes on through books, and a very few at that, on how to live well, to a couple of treatises on prayer For the time, it is the more or less inevitable difference between a new religious point of view struggling to establish its premises and an old religious point of view rebuilding on long-established foundations It is the real reason why English churchmen eager to enrich the inner life of their institution read with interest the prayer books of Rome and borrowed liberally from them And the substitution of Parsons' point of view for Bunny's is really the story of one of the most interesting things that happened in the English Church in those very interesting years from 1600 to 1640

CHAPTER III

SURVIVALS FROM THE OLD DEVOTIONAL LITERATURE OF ENGLAND

As usually happens in the age that succeeds a revolution, not a little of the fresh progress of the opening of the seventeenth century consisted in a recovery of elements too hastily discarded in the first heat of innovation and a recognition of neglected elements that had unobtrusively weathered the storms of revolution Nowhere is this fact more apparent than in the devotional literature of the time.

To begin with, although it was a habit of the seventeenth century writers to talk as if there were nothing worth mentioning in the way of English devotional literature until they came on the scene, England seems at one time to have been peculiarly rich in all kinds of devotional literature. In a study of some twenty-five years ago the late Cardinal Gasquet called attention to the volume of the output of religious books from the presses of the first English printers More than half of the work of Caxton could be classed as religious and fully three-quarters of that of Wynkyn de Worde up to 1510 [1] True, a very large number of these books could in no sense be regarded as devotional. Most of the saints' lives, while indubitably edifying in their intent, could hardly be considered devotional in any very inward sense On the other hand, a work like the *Speculum Vitae Christi,* or the *Mirrour of the blessyd Life of Christ,* founded as it is upon the work of one of the greatest of mediaeval mystics, Saint Bonaventura, would definitely come under the heading of devotional works This particular book seems to have been popular, running through some half dozen editions at the hands of various printers between the years 1488 and 1525 [2]

[1] F A Gasquet, "The Bibliography of some Devotional Books printed by the Earliest English Printers" (London, 1904), *Transactions of the Bibliographical Society,* VII, 164

[2] *Ibid*, pp 177-178

There seems to have been also an abundance of that great staple of the pious, books on the Four Last Things It is probable that Caxton himself translated the *Ars Moriendi,* which he published about 1491 with the engaging explanation of the Latin title, "that is to say, the craft for to die for the health of man's soul."[3] Not only was this work reprinted, but there were a number of others of the same tenor from various presses of the time, in Holland and France as well as England Of these latter, one of the most interesting was Antoine Vérard's, *The art of good lyvyng & good deying,* printed at Paris in 1503[4] One of the latest of the group was *The Dayly exercyse and experience of dethe,* written in the early part of the sixteenth century by Richard Whitford, and published by John Wayland in 1537[5]

Practical as all these works are from the point of view of their time, they are yet from the point of view of devotional literature low-lying and routine, the foot-hills of the subject, as it were It is interesting to know, in view of the state of things a century later in England, that the higher reaches of the devotional range were also represented at this time, and generously represented too, in a series of mystical works, some of them among the great mystical works of all ages Notable among works now often disregarded is the *Mons Perfectionis,* or *The Hille of Perfection,* of John Alcock, Bishop of Ely, a work to the popularity of which we have abundant witness in the presence of several manuscript copies in the British Museum This Wynkyn de Worde and Richard Pynson published in 1497, and De Worde alone in 1501[6] Still more exciting is the vogue at this time of a really great mystical work which has enjoyed in recent years a marked revival of interest, the *Scala Perfectionis,* or *The Ladder of Perfection,* by Walter Hilton, the masterpiece of one of the most famous of the English mystics of the Middle Ages. Wynkyn de Worde first published this in 1494 and then reprinted it in 1525 and 1532 It was also printed by Julian Notary in 1507[7]

[3] *Ibid*, p 179
[4] *Ibid*, p 181
[5] *Ibid*, pp 180-181
[6] *Ibid*, p 181
[7] *Ibid*, pp. 181-182

Quite as important for the lover of the English mystics, who is finding a growing company of sympathizers these days, is the publication in 1506 by De Worde of Richard Rolle's *The Contemplacyons of the drede and love of God* Rolle also figures in this list with the publication of his *De Emendatione Vitae* at Paris in 1510 [8]

An even rarer devotional writer appears in Caxton's *A Book of divers Ghostly matters,* published in 1490 For in this book of selections Caxton includes the *Orologium Sapientiae* of Suso in an English version called *The seven points of true love and everlasting wisdom* [9]

The publication by Wynkyn de Worde of *The Medytacyons of Saint Bernard* in 1496, an edition reissued in 1525, should also be noted in view of later developments [10] So should the translation of the *Imitation of Christ* by W Atkinson (the first three parts) and the Lady Margaret (the fourth part), published by Pynson in 1502, 1503, and 1517 and by De Worde in 1502 and shortly after at a time not known for certain [11]

Two other types of this time should also be noted in these devotional books, not for any special interest in the particular representatives of that day but because they are early examples of types destined to play a large part in seventeenth century devotional literature The first of these is the series of meditations on particular parts of Scripture, in this case, the Psalms The most popular of these is *The Seven Penytencyall Psalms of David* by Bishop Fisher published twice by Wynkyn de Worde, in 1508 and 1509, by Pynson in 1510, and still again by Wynkyn de Worde in the years between 1525 and 1529 [12] The second type is prefigured in *The Contemplatyon of Synners for every day in the week,* which Wynkyn de Worde published in 1499 It is said that the original of this work was compiled by Richard de Bury.[13] The important thing is that in its arrangement of meditations for each day of the week and in its compilation of sentences from

[8] *Ibid*, p 182
[9] *Ibid*, pp 182-183
[10] *Ibid*, p 183
[11] *Ibid*, p 187
[12] *Ibid*
[13] *Ibid*, p 186

Scripture and the Fathers with various edifying reflections upon them, all making for some pious conclusion, it very definitely prefigures one of the most popular of seventeenth century types of devotional book The idea of such a book is of course much older than the fifteenth century, going back as it does through various primers to the Breviary itself. But its use at this time is significant.

Of course the religious developments of the sixteenth century in England swept most of this away For the direct continuation of the movements that characterized this devotional literature of the early sixteenth century we should a century later have to go to France, where, as we shall see shortly, fugitive Recusants in convents and monasteries still read Richard Rolle and Walter Hilton. But in their own land these great English masters of the devotional life seem to have been pretty much forgotten.

Even when the tension of the first changes had relaxed, and men had taken possession of their new positions and were free to furnish them with more than argument, even then when they came to look about them for the help of the maturer works of those who had enjoyed the devotional opportunities of longer tenure, many of these once popular mediaeval and early Renaissance writers were still left undisturbed. For we must remember that when the men of the seventeenth century approached certain sections of this material, they looked upon it very differently from the way in which we do. Much of the literature of the Middle Ages which Christians today of all persuasions and of none appropriate with no sense of alienness or strangeness was still contraband. The smoke of a thousand bitter controversies still hung over pages that long since have become the quiet refuge of generations of the descendants of both sides

And there was also some fundamental difference of taste, quite apart from this fundamental one of principle, to be regarded. Perhaps as good an example as any is that of Saint Francis, today the beloved of every religious party. Where few religious figures of history, ancient or modern, may pass the jealously-held gates of scepticism, the little brown figure of the Poverello passes many a marvel-swept threshold of today to be enshrined in a half-sentimental tenderness that apparently offers no offense to modernism

or to agnosticism But John Donne and his contemporaries seem to have seen nothing more in him than an absurd and perhaps not over-clean patron of marvels and miracles and other "monkeries" In these regions there is something curiously untender in the mind, and perhaps also in the heart, of seventeenth century England

That may be one reason why the mystic side of Saint Augustine and of some of the other Fathers of the Church does not seem to have made much impression on most of those who used them as arsenals for the controversies of the period A good many things go to show that the majority of the early Protestant leaders were not of a particularly mystical type of mind, indeed, not of a type of mind that would be in the least sympathetic with mysticism. For that matter, there is not much to indicate that most of their controversial opponents were, either After all human energy is a very limited thing

But there is evidence that some of the pre-Reformation favorites in mysticism and devotion did survive the frosts and the heats of the controversies of the middle of the sixteenth century. And when one remembers the bitterness of the factions of the period, the marvel is not that so few survived but that any survived the tightly-drawn battle-lines of the time There is in it something very suggestive of that astonishing intellectual commerce between the lines that is so characteristic of this devotional literature.

In view of the fact that so much of the controversy that troubled the Church of England was concerned with the testimony and the example of antiquity, it was only natural that documents of the pre-mediaeval church in England should be enthusiastically seized upon, wherever available Probably the most popular of these rescues, to judge from the number of copies that still exist, was a sermon of Aelfric which was first reprinted apparently in 1567, with an impressive certification of accuracy from some thirteen bishops, headed by the two archbishops [14] The sermon itself is a detailed exposition of the nature of the Sacrament of the Body and Blood of the Lord in fairly homely terms, with an eye not only to theological instruction but also to edification There is no question that part of the popularity of this revival was due to the am-

[14] Abbot Aelfric, *A Testimonie of Antiquitie, shewing the auncient fayth in the Church of England touching the sacrament of the body and bloude of the Lord*, etc (London [1567?])

munition that the Saxon work gave to the lovers of antiquity against the Puritans, and in certain phrases to Anglicans against Rome, for the accompanying explanations stress the soundness of doctrine rather than the devotional aspect Editions of 1623, 1638,[15] and 1687 survive, and while one can not always take seventeenth century editors' references to other and, especially, inaccurate editions too seriously, it is probable that there were others, and not impossible that there was a Catholic one Certainly, if there was not, the paladins of Douai and Rouen missed a very good chance For in spite of some fumbling of issues the main drift of the argument would prove not unavailable for their purposes

A manual of prayers, meditations, and examinations, for the sick, compiled by Anselm was another revival of the time, being printed under the title of *Manuale Catholicorum A Manuall for True Catholickes* in 1611 This time the editor and translator, William Crashaw, shows very definite Puritan sympathies, for he carefully omits all of Anselm's references to the priest's part in the preparation of the dying, either transferring them to a bystander, or impersonally summarizing them,[16] and then he calls the reader's attention to the fact that in olden times the intervention of the priest on such an occasion was not thought indispensable He then draws the obvious conclusion that such emphasis of the priest's part is a modern imposition of the Roman clergy [17]

It is pleasant to note that this interest in the ancient church of England included an interest in Bede, witnessed to in a Latin edition of his philosophical works of 1592 and, with an even subtler fitness, in 1609 a new translation, the first in English since George Colville's in 1556, of that pagan favorite of mediaeval devotion, Boethius' *Five Bookes, of Philosophical Comfort* The translator of this latter work modestly calls the reader's attention to the fact that he has turned it into English verse and prose, "which how hard it was to effect, thou mayest guesse in part . since our prince of Poets, *Chaucer* turned it only into prose."[18]

[15] Pollard and Redgrave

[16] Saint Anselm, *Manuale Catholicorum A Manuall for True Catholickes* [trans and ed William Crashaw] (London, 1611), pp 86-110

[17] *Ibid* , sigs F_6-F_8

[18] Anitius M T S Boethius, *Five Bookes, of Philosophical Comfort*, trans I T (London, 1609), sig A_8

But interesting as all these survivals are, they pale in significance before the three most popular survivals of these old masters. Curiously enough in view of the well-known contempt of the seventeenth century for the Middle Ages two of them are mediaeval writers, and a large part of the material printed as the work of the third is of mediaeval composition.

The first of these survivors is that same Saint Augustine whose theological writings afforded so much of the ammunition for the controversies of the day For the lovers of his *Confessions* it is pleasant to reflect that he was known too for the joys of religious peace as well as for the ardors of religious war Like most of the old writers he was of course available *in toto* for the learned reader And the serious writing of the period gives abundant evidence that he was so read The unregenerate Donne apparently knew the *Confessions* well and culled from it some of the most beautiful and most mystical passages without entirely understanding them But in view of the well-known Elizabethan reliance on translations a still more valuable index than the Latin reading of a scholar is the making of English translations

Of the *Confessions* itself apparently the first translation appeared on the Catholic side, in 1620. This has been ascribed to Sir Tobie Mathew, who is known to have translated the *Confessions* at that time The title-page is revealing. *The Confessions of the Incomparable Doctour S Augustine, Translated into English Togeather With a large Preface, which it will much import to be read ouer first, that so the Booke it selfe may both profit, and please, the Reader, more Cibus sum grandium, cresce, & manducabis me D Aug Conf 1 7 c 10 I am the food of strong persons, grow up, and thou shalt be able to eate me* And still more revealing of the motives for translation of one of the world's great mystical biographies is the "large preface" so zealously commended One passage will suffice "This Saint hath been particulerly ill vsed by his Translatours both of the books *de Ciuitate Dei,* and those also of his *Meditations,* out of which the seuerall Translatours haue boldly, & sacrilegiously, stolne out those passages, which might declare to any man that were but halfe blind, that the beliefe and practise of S *Augustine* and the Church of his tyme, were fully agreable to that of the Catholike *Roman Church* at this day,

as that of our Aduersaryes is wholy different "[19] And the translator goes on to arraign the delinquencies of various translators, especially of Rogers, whose translation of the *Meditations* will be noticed shortly

No one familiar with the healthy fighting spirit of seventeenth century divines would expect such a challenge to be neglected Nor was it It is not certain that it was this particular book of Mathew's that the new translator had in mind, but it is likely True, he suspected Robert Parsons of it, but at that time Robert Parsons was the favorite explanation of all religious mischief in England [20]

Like the 1620 Catholic translation the title-page of William Watts' translation pays tribute to the preoccupations of the day: *Saint Augustine's Confessions translated and With some marginall notes illustrated. Wherein Diuers Antiquities are explayned, And the marginall notes of a former Popish Translation, answered* In spite of this controversial bias William Watts achieved a translation that for the general English-speaking public has been standard until almost our own day and still remains one of the classics in its own field This was in 1631

Further editions of Mathew's translation and of Watts' were published on the Continent, but at this point they are of little importance The same is true of a translation of a minor tract, *De cura pro mortuis gerenda,* published abroad in 1636 Healey's translation of Saint Augustine's *Of the Citie of God,* published in 1610, and again, corrected by William Crashaw, in 1620, is of more interest, although that work can be called devotional only in a very limited sense

Curiously enough the devotional reputation of Saint Augustine in this period is based almost entirely on a series of supposititious works which enjoyed an enormous vogue in England *An Introduction to the Loue of God* (translated by Fletcher) was in circulation as early as 1574 and enjoyed popularity enough to warrant at least one reprinting *The Glasse of vaine-glorie* (translated by a certain W P.) ran through at least four editions between 1585 and 1605. So did *A right Christian Treatise entituled S Augustines praiers,* etc. (translated by Thomas Rogers) between 1581 and

[19] *The Confessions of the Incomparable Doctour S Augustine* [trans. Sir Tobie Mathew] ([St Omer,] 1620), sig. A_4

[20] *Saint Augustine's Confessions,* trans William Watts (London, 1631), sig A_8^v.

1604 But of all the works attributed to Saint Augustine the *Meditations* in various forms was the most popular both in England and among the Recusants on the Continent Of *Certaine Select Prayers gathered out of S Augustines Meditations,* first published apparently in 1574, five editions survive from the period 1574-1586 Of Thomas Rogers' version, known as *St Augustines Manuel,* four editions still exist from the years 1581-1604, and of his *A pretious Booke of Heauenlie Meditations* six from the years 1581-1640 Then there are various Recusant selections bearing the imprint of St Omer, Paris, and Douai

Finally, the large part which prayers and meditations attributed rightly or wrongly to Saint Augustine play in the collections of prayers of the time should not be forgotten As early a collection as that of the Puritan Thomas Becon, *The Pomaunder of Prayer,* first published in 1558, contains "Certaine godly Meditations made in the forme of Prayers by S Augustine, whiche if thou wilt read with a feruent spirit, they wil stirre thee much to deuotion "[21] Throughout the period Saint Augustine as represented by his own and by mediaeval works attributed to him remains one of the staples of English prayer books

But this does not mean that the English translators in any way compromised the attitude of their time toward the Middle Ages One of Rogers' versions strikingly reveals the watchfulness that characterized this whole translation literature It is *A Pretious Booke of Heauenlie Meditations, called A priuate Talke of the soule with God,* printed in 1581 with the following description on the title-page

> Which who so zealouslie wil vse and peruse, shal feele in his mind an vnspeakable sweetnes of the euerlasting happines, Written (as some thinke) by that reuerend and religious Father, S Augustine, and not translated onlie, but purified also, and with most ample and necessarie sentences of Holie Scripture adorned

In the "Epistle Dedicatory" of this work Rogers explains at some length his reasons for this scriptural embellishment in terms so characteristic of the time as to deserve quotation

> For, seeing the booke, by perusing it to mine vnspeakable both profite and pleasure, to sauor most fragrantlie of the flowers and sentences not of humane,

[21] Thomas Becon, *The Pomaunder of Prayer* (London [1560?]), p 65 ff

that is vane wisedome, but of God's holie word, and to be as holie for phrase, as for matter holie, being wholie taken out of the holie Scripture me thought were the places of Scripture annexed in the margine, it would be a quick spur, not onlie vnto the true Christians zealouslie to read this ancient and godlie Father, when they should see al his sentences in a maner to be nothing but verie Scripture, but also vnto Papists, who, neglecting Scripture cleane overmuch vnto this, and other Fathers of the Church, to reade the Scriptures, when they should perceaue al his delight to be in vsing the verie words of the holie Ghost [22]

As other items in his preface indicate, for instance his earnest appeal for the suppression of plays, Rogers was very much on the alert for dangers to right faith As a result, he felt compelled in his translation to make certain omissions, which he justified as follows:

Had I not so done, I should haue said, that the hands of GOD, *Manus inquam illae quae affixae clavis sunt pro me,* did make me I should haue said, that the light which was made, when God said, Let there be light, was *Angelica scilicet natura* finalie, I should haue said, that we ought to doubt, *An ad portum salutis peruenire valeamus, quia omnia in futurum reseruantur incerta* and so where my purpose was to edifie, I should haue destroied the soules of the weake with erronious opinions Beside, I should haue cooled the zeale euen of the strongest, when thinking to proceede in holie meditation, they should find such stumbling blocks of error cast in their waie And therefore did I iudge it better to leaue them quite out, though it greeue the Papistes, than to leaue them in, either to the destruction of some, or to the offence of anie good Christian maruelling much why in other English translations this matter hath not bin loked vnto ere this, and these faultes not wholie, as in part they be, amended [23]

Only less popular than Saint Augustine was Saint Bernard To one to whom Bernard of Clairvaux means a hymn to the Virgin or that exquisite description of the all but supreme mystical experience in the great series of Lenten sermons on the *Canticle of Canticles* there is something divinely comic in the fact that it is as a popular, not to say vulgar, exponent of the contemporary version of the *Memorare Novissima* that Saint Bernard was most generally remembered in the seventeenth century As such, if one may judge from the broadsides and fly sheets that have come down to us from this period, he must have been very much of a

[22] Saint Augustine *A Pretious Booke of Heauenlie Meditations, called a priuate Talke of the soule with God,* trans Thomas Rogers (London, 1581), sigs A_8^v-A_9

[23] *Ibid*, sigs A_8^v-A_9^v

best-seller among the lovers of piety In the Roxburghe collection, for instance, there is a lively "Saint Bernard's Vision, or, A briefe Discourse (Dialogue-wise) betweene the Soule and the Body of a damned man newly deceased, laying open the faults of each other With a speech of the Divels in Hell," set to the tune of "Fortune my Foe,"[24] and in the Douce collection the same version, set to the tune of *Flying Fame* [25]

In view of such dubious associations it is reassuring to remember that Bernard's verses also found an appreciative response on the higher levels of the poetry of the time Perhaps the first example to be noticed is Edwards' beautiful translation of "the blessed S Barnards verses, conteining the vnstable felicitie of this way faring world" in *The Paradyse of daynty deuises* of 1576 [26] It was to find noble successors in the poetry of our period, but they can hardly claim a place in this study of prose

The explanation of this aspect of Bernard's fame, if any is needed beyond the well-known predilection of the seventeenth century for the tokens of man's mortality, is probably to be found in the epistle which William Crashaw addressed to some friends among the Benchers of the Inner Temple on the occasion of his publication of this classic in 1616 under the title of *The Complaint or Dialogue, Betwixt the Soule and the Bodie of a damned man* It is hardly necessary in view of the known predilections of the famous Puritan divine who was the father of the poet Richard Crashaw to say that this edition was drawn from an ancient manuscript He begins his address with the characteristic point that the men of olden time used reflections on death to help them to live well and then goes on to say.

One euidence thereof is this short and sweet Dialogue, which (as a fore-runner of others that may follow) being diuulged and desired by many to be englished, I am therefore induced to make it common, This being an age that needs al helps to holinesse, and inticements to deuotion And this the rather, in as much, as tho it was made in the Mist of Popery, euen not long after the Diuell was let loose, yet is it not tainted with Popish corruption,

[24] *Saint Bernard's Vision,* etc (London [1640?]), *Roxburghe Ballads* (in the British Museum), I, 376 377

[25] *Saint Bernard's Vision,* etc (London [n d]), *Douce Ballads* (in the Bodleian Library) 3, II, 89

[26] *The Paradyse of daynty deuises conteining sundry pithy preceptes, learned counsels, and excellent inuentions, right pleasant and profitable for all estates* [*D*]*euised and written for the most part, by M Edwardes, etc* ([2nd ed ?] London, 1578), sigs A_2^v-A_3

nor scarce smels of any superstition, whereas it is stuft with godly truthes, and wholsome instructions[27]

Another serious publication of Saint Bernard is to be found in a work first brought out some years before Crashaw's, in 1610-11, but now published for the third time in 1631 under the title of *Saint Bernard His Meditations or Sighes, Sobbes, and Teares, vpon our Saviours Passion, In Memorial of his Death, Also His Motiues to Mortification, with other Meditations,* by "W P Mr of Arts in Cambridge" A fourth edition of this work also survives Its popularity in this period is of especial interest because of the vogue which other English translations had enjoyed a century before.

Still another work of Bernard to find serious translation in this period is the *golden Treatise of S Bernard, de Interiori Domo teaching how to build vp the inward conscience,* which was added to *Ioy in Tribulation, or Triall in afflictions,* printed with Steven Jerome's *A Serious Fore-warning* in 1613 To this was also joined *The forme of an honest life written by S Bernard* The inevitable book of selections appeared later at Douai in 1631 in *A Hive of Sacred Honie-Combes containing most Sweet and Heavenly Counsel Taken out of the Workes of the mellifluous Doctor S Bernard* by Antonie Batt But this does not properly belong to this party of our study. Nor does Whitford's printing of the supposititious *Golden Epistle of Sainct Bernarde* with his translation of the *Imitation,* though this association of the two works was preserved long after Whitford's own time in continental editions of his version After all, it was only to be expected that the Recusants should keep whatever of the genuine or the supposed Saint Bernard they already possessed.

What is important at this point is that Bernard's works are very freely drawn upon by writers of all opinions for appropriate prayers and meditations Indeed, Abraham Fleming in *A Monomachie of Motiues in the mind of man Or a Battell betweene Vertues and Vices of contrarie qualitie* of 1582 took the skeleton of his work from Bernard. And, as the title-page goes on to explain, "Herevnto also, besides sundrie deuout praiers necessarilie

[27] Saint Bernard, *The Complaint or Dialogue, Betwixt the Soule and the Bodie of a damned man,* trans etc by William Crashaw (London, 1616), sig A_3^v

interlaced, diuers golden sentences of S Bernard are annexed. and also a briefe conclusion of his vpon this Theame, that Victorie is obtained by resisting temptation "

Needless to say, Saint Bernard the theologian and Saint Bernard the wise man turn up again and again in the sermons of John Donne and others of the cultivated and the learned and in the letters of the time, but it was the Saint Bernard of the *memento mori* who played the largest part in the popular religious thought of the time, and who furnished the occasion for grisly and edifying woodcuts in the best or the worst manner of the seventeenth century broadside

The third great survival of mediaeval devotional, and in this case mystical, literature is of course the *Imitation of Christ* The story of how this thoroughly mediaeval work of mystical devotion serenely rode all the storms of religious controversy of the three bitterest of modern Christian centuries is one of the most impressive demonstrations of the enduring authenticity of a classic to be found in the annals of literature First printed in Latin by Gunther Zainer at Augsburg some time between 1470 and 1475, it ran in whole or part through about fifty Latin editions before the end of the fifteenth century. By the end of the sixteenth century the total of the Latin editions had risen to something like a hundred and thirty-one, and by the end of the seventeenth century, to more than two hundred and eighty The list of the places of publication of these editions reads like a directory of the publishing world For the seventeenth century it includes, to name only some of the outstanding, Cracow, Antwerp, Douai, Rome, Paris, Ingolstadt, Brussels, Leyden, Lucerne, London, Amsterdam, Louvain, Vienna, Frankfort-on-Main, Venice, Cologne

At its first printing, the *Imitation* was ascribed to Thomas of Mount Saint Agnes, the modern Thomas à Kempis, an ascription pretty generally accepted at the present time But a few years later it was ascribed to John Gerson, the famous chancellor of the University of Paris, known to every student of mysticism as one of the great mediaeval authorities on the mystical theology, but not generally so much esteemed as a practical mystic It is not surprising in view of the general Renaissance conception of the relations between learning and practice in the arts that this

ascription of so popular a work to a known master should outweigh that to an obscure man The result is that we find the work throughout the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries ascribed first to one and then to the other, and that when we find the name of Gerson in a seventeenth century list of devotional writers, or of reading, we can never be sure that anything more is meant than the *Imitation,* a very embarrassing circumstance to one who is searching for references to mediaeval mystical authorities [28]

But interesting as is the story of the Latin editions of the *Imitation,* it is surpassed for our purposes at least by that of the English translations It begins with the translation already referred to, that of William Atkinson, which Wynkyn de Worde printed in 1502, and Pynson in 1503 With the addition of the Lady Margaret's translation of the fourth book, first brought out in 1504, this version went through not less than five or six editions before the end of the first quarter of the century Somewhere about 1531 Richard Whitford's translation took the field, running through at least half a dozen editions by 1556 Significantly enough, there is no record in either De Backer or Pollard and Redgrave of any English edition between 1556 and 1568 It is also significant that the next printing of Whitford's translation, that of 1585, bears neither the name of the place of publication nor the name of the printer The style of illustration is not unlike that of books known to have been printed in Flanders, but the possibility of an unlicensed press in England is never out of the question in this period

The third of the great English translations of the time, Edward Hake's, appears in 1567 and again in 1568. In 1580 comes the best-known of all the English translations, Thomas Rogers', of which some fourteen editions from the next sixty years still survive In 1613 another translation, by B F [Anthony Hoskins?], appears without any place of publication on the title-page,[29] and this version is reprinted certainly three times and perhaps more Then in 1624 M. C, Thomas Carre, the confessor of the English nuns in Paris and the friend of Richard Crashaw,

[28] For the general bibliography of the *Imitation,* these paragraphs are indebted to Augustin de Backer, *Essai Bibliographique sur le Livre de Imitatione Christi* (Liége, 1864) Unfortunately, this work is not accurate for the English translations

[29] Really a modernization of Whitford's translation

brings out for Catholic use a translation which was certainly reprinted in 1631 and 1641.[30] One more English translation comes into our period, Page's, published both at London and at Oxford in 1639.

What all this amounts to is that there was a constant stream of English translations of the *Imitation of Christ* for nearly a hundred years before the opening of our period and throughout our period, and that to judge from the number of times that some of these versions were reprinted, they must have enjoyed a very considerable degree of popularity. The second interesting thing to note is that in spite of the great confusion of a large part of the period this stream continued regardless of the changes in official religion. The third thing is that if we look at these editions in some detail, we shall find that a process of adaptation and naturalization has taken place that is very illuminating for the light it sheds on the intellectual as well as the devotional habits of the time. This does not affect Atkinson and Whitford and Carre, who hold the point of view of Thomas à Kempis in general unchanged. But it is interesting to note that the passion for the purer text, and the delight in correcting the inaccuracies of predecessors which are responsible for some of the less well-tempered aspects of Puritan controversy make their appearance in a very mild degree in Whitford. Naturally, he pronounced Master William Atkinson's translation "right wel and deuoutly translated," but he goes on to point out that Atkinson omitted some things from his translation, and that the Lady Margaret translated her fourth book from a French version and not from the authentic Latin.[31] And in the newly-added preface to the edition of 1556 he pays tribute to the exigencies of his time in a passage very typical of his point of view:

> Amonge manye Treatises, whiche haue bene put out both in latin and englishe, in this perillous world, to seduce the simple people, & to bring them from the vnitie of the Catholike Church into peruers and abhominable errours, there hath bene also in time past before made by diuers learned and vertuous men many good Treatises, which if men would be so diligent to looke vpon, as they are curious to looke on the other, they should not so soone fall from the true knowledge of Christes doctrine, and the right sense of holy Scripture, whiche euer hath bene taught by continual succession in

[30] Carre's version is almost identical with B. F.'s.

[31] *The followyng of Christ*, trans. Richard Whitforde (London [1585?]), sigs. A_2-A_2^v.

his holy Church, of the holy ghost, the spirite of trueth, who shall euer remayne with it[32]

It is also interesting to note that from about 1540 Whitford added to the *Imitation, The Golden Epistle of Sainct Bernarde*

When Edward Hake made his translation of the *Imitation* in 1567, he faced, of course, a very different problem First of all, he omitted the difficult fourth book on the Eucharist This was the general Protestant procedure, for the fundamental premises of that book are too clearly bound up with the rejected dogma of Transubstantiation to be available for the alchemy of sixteenth century translation To this omission he made no reference, but with the excuse "as springing out of the same roote" on his title-page, he joined to the *Imitation* a very interesting treatise, which will be discussed in a later chapter, called *A short and pretie Treatise touching the perpetuall Reioyce of the godly, euen in this lyfe* Hake also annotated in the *Imitation* itself various passages the faithful translation of which he feared might do harm to his readers For instance, he translates that passage so characteristic of the monastic reformer in the chapter "Of solitarie life" "Thou must be made a foole for Christ his sake, if that thou wilt leade a godly lyfe The garment and shorne heade make nothing to the purpose but it is the chaunging of our conditions, and the full mortifying of our olde Adam, that causeth a man to be godly in deede," and then in the margin, he prints the necessary reassurance "He meaneth not Munkish life"[33] In the twenty-first chapter of the third book, titled, "Of the bearing of iniuries and wrongs and who it is that is pacient in deede," Thomas says in Hake's words "Wherefore bee thou in a readinesse to battayle, if thou wilt obtayne the victorie Surely, without fighting, thou shalt neuer get the crowne of pacience Now, if thou wilte not suffer, thou refusest to bee crowned, but if thou desire to bee crowned, striue like a man, and beare the fight pacyentlye For neyther is rest gotten without labour, nor yet victorye procured wythoute fighting" Against this Hake writes "Workes shall be rewarded in euerlasting life, not with euerlasting life, which is

[32] *The following of Christ*, trans Richard Whiteforde (London, 1556), Sig A_2^v

[33] *The Imitation or following of Christ*, etc, trans. Edwarde Hake (London, 1568), p 18

onelye purchased by the merites of Christ"[34] So wherever Hake finds Thomas à Kempis preaching what he knows to be mistaken doctrine, he does not hesitate to insert the necessary correction in the margin without apology for his correction or his author's error, a procedure the candor of which is deserving of all appreciation when the controversial manners of the time are remembered

Like Hake, Rogers, the next translator, prints only the first three books of the *Imitation* in his first edition of 1580 But in 1592, when he published what was at least the seventh edition of his version of the first three books, he solved the problem of the fourth book For he now added to the three books of Thomas à Kempis a translation of the *Soliloquium Animae* under the title of *The sole-talke of the Soule Or, A Spiritual and heauenlie Dialogue betwixt the Soule of Man and God,* with the following explanation on the title-page· "Which, for the great affinitie it hath with other bookes of the Auctor published heeretofore in our natiue tongue, is now entituled *The Fourth booke of the Imitation of Christ*" He then proceeds to justify this substitution, along with the other deviations from his original which he had felt compelled to make, in a delightful "Address to the Christian Reader" which deserves rank as a locus classicus in the literature of religious translation

> In the dooing whereof, I haue as little as might bee varied from the auctor's words and phrazes, and no where from the sense, but where himselfe hath varied from the truth of God, and, I doubt not, would have redressed, had hee liued in these daies of light, as he did in the time of most palpable blindnes
>
> And this haue I doon with the greater alacritie, because I finde (and thou maist reade it also in the Auctors owne Preface) that hee not onlie doubted that hee might vtter some things both fonde and offensiue, but also wished to haue some godlie corrector of his faultes, and praied vnto almightie God gratiouslie to reueale, such thinges offensiue, either vnto himselfe, or vnto some other
>
> Whose godlie praier, God hath heard, and discouered those things for thy benefit, and testification besides howe Kempisius, the Auctor, howsoeuer liuing in a Popish time, was yet in hart no Papist, but would like well of that which is doon, as I trust thou wilt, whose edifieing, and spirituall comforting, I have onlie aimed at[35]

[34] *Ibid*, p 83

[35] *The Imitation of Christ,* etc, trans Thomas Rogers (London, 1592), sigs A_3^v-A_4^v

As he had said himself in his "second Epistle concerning the translation and correction of this Booke" in the 1580 edition of the first three books of the *Imitation,* Rogers wrote with an eye to the simpler sort of reader and not for the learned [36] Consequently, he felt himself responsible for not letting any error slip by which the unlearned reader would not be able to detect for himself The unlearned reader must have appreciated his solicitude, for the public accorded his translation a patronage given to no other of the translations of the period

Beside Hake and Rogers the continental translators seem pale Thomas Carre (Miles Pinckney) deserves perhaps a little attention, partly because he was Crashaw's friend, and partly because he seems to have taken an unusual interest in Thomas à Kempis himself He prefaces his 1636 edition of the *Imitation* with an account of his life, his personality, and his preaching Apparently, he had some degree of access to the rich and little-known stores of material about Thomas' community In 1653 he published his own translation of some of Thomas' sermons, those *Of the Incarnation and Passion of Christ,* and in the same year the *Soliloquies* of Thomas à Kempis

On this general theme of survivals, one more group of books should be mentioned, although, properly speaking, they are hardly to be called survivals These are the Primers The Primer as a devotional type, of course, comes out of the Middle Ages, principally from the Book of Hours It is essentially a complete prayer book and compendium of religious direction for the layman At the beginning of the sixteenth century the Primer seems to have been enormously popular in England both in the Latin and in the partly Latin and partly English forms A very good example of the type, and one of peculiar interest because of its date, was the Primer which Thielman Kerver published at Paris in 1532 with the following title and description "This prymer of Salysbury Vse is set out a long wout only serchyng/ with many prayers/ and goodly pyctures in the kalendar/ in the matyns of our lady/ in the houres of the crosse/ in the vii psalmes/ & in the dyryge " It is an extraordinarily rich collection of prayers, selections from Scripture, instructions, meditations, offices of several sorts, and treatises on

[36] *The Imitation of Christ,* etc , trans Thomas Rogers (London, 1580), sig A_{ii}

various aspects of the devout life Its quality is, on the whole, very high, but its very luxuriance of good things enhances the dominant effect of something over-grown It needs selection and organization very badly.

Apparently, the first steps which the English Reformers took in the direction of providing for the devotional needs of their party were a modification of this type of Primer That *goodly prymer in englyshe* which John Byddell printed in London for William Marshall in 1535 must represent a very early stage in the process. The editor of this book apparently judged it unwise to go very far with the process of expurgation which his principles demanded. And he took some pains to defend himself against what he terms the "misunderstandings" which had arisen out of one of his omissions in an earlier edition [37] So he prints the devotional forms which every one (including episcopal authority) would expect to find in such a book, like "The salutation of our most blessed lady saynt Mary the virgin," and the Litany, and the Dirige, but in every case he prefaces these, from his point of view questionable, devotions with astonishingly outspoken admonitions and warnings to the reader The ending of the "admonition or warnyng to the reder, necessarie to be hadde and redde, for the true vnderstandinge and meanynge of yͤ Dirige" is typical

> Finally, there is nothynge in the Dirige taken out of scripture, that maketh any more mention of the soules departed, than dothe the tale of Robyn Hoode But lorde suche is the blyndnes of men Wherfore to make an ende, what soeuer thou arte christen reder, yf it fortune thy lorde, thy heuenly father of his benigne mercy and goodnes, to thentent that he wyll haue yͤ saued, as he wold haue Iob, to chastice the of loue, as he dyd hym, and to exercise thy faythe, as he dyd Iobes than mayest thou with Iob, make thy compleynt to god, euyn with these forsayd IX lessons And for that purpose they do serue excedyngly well [38]

The Primer, set foorth by the Kynges maiestie and his Clergie, to be taught lerned, & read and none other to be vsed throughout all his dominions in 1545 is, as might be expected, on too loftily official a plane for such explanations and admonitions as characterize Marshall's Primer But serenely as it rides through troubled waters on tacit assumptions, it yet differs markedly from the old

[37] [William Marshall?] *A goodly prymer in englyshe,* etc (London, 1535), sigs L_2^v-L_3
[38] *Ibid*, sig K_4

Primer both in what it omits and what it adds In this it is, of course, highly characteristic of Henry's general position

Consequently, there is nothing surprising in the fact that when *A Primmer or boke of priuate prayer nedefull to bee vsed of all faythful christians* (which was in press when Edward VI died) appeared, only eight years later, in 1553, it was definitely a Protestant book The detailed study of these changes and of how they came about belongs rather to the history of sixteenth century devotion than to that of the seventeenth But the facts are essential for the understanding of the background of the devotional literature which we are studying And in a representative sense they are yet more significant, for the process by which the sixteenth century Reformers moved in so short a time from the old Primer in use at the beginning of the century to the Primer of 1553 is one eminently characteristic not only of that century but in a good many ways of the next

CHAPTER IV

English Translations from Continental Books of Devotion

Much more complicated and vast is the field of contemporary foreign influence, particularly that due to the importation and translation of continental books of devotion The evidence is very scattered, often very obscure, usually difficult to come at, and still more difficult to evaluate In certain portions of the field the main lines seem fairly clear; in others one can pick up only a few isolated facts to go on, and yet in certain cases these scattered details are endlessly suggestive and even in a flashlight fashion illuminating Very little has been written on this field, important as it is for its many illustrations of how ideas move back and forth across the deeply entrenched lines of intellectual battle But some view is essential to our study, and, however rough and tentative and incomplete, valuable in itself as a suggestion for more detailed work

In spite of the enormous debt of the English Church to the continental leaders of the Protestant Reformation, particularly to Calvin and his followers, all the evidence points to very much less borrowing from continental Protestant sources for the books of devotion than one would suppose Works of theology, controversy, and homiletics, borrowed freely from continental Protestant writers, but on the whole the books of devotion are much less heavily indebted to Protestant than to Catholic sources. The reason is probably that the book of devotion as distinguished from the book of instruction was at the beginning very much more a Catholic than a Protestant institution. It was one of the outstanding features of the Catholic as distinguished from the Protestant Reformation, and in its development in English it affords one of the most interesting evidences we have for the thesis already advanced in an earlier chapter that the history of the English Church in the

seventeenth century is in some important respects to be associated with that of the Catholic Reformation

However, some continental Protestant books of devotion, as distinguished from divinity, were early made available to ordinary readers in English translations, and some of these translations seem to have enjoyed great popularity throughout this period Of these one of the earliest is a translation from Calvin, Thomas Broke's *Of the lyfe or conuersation of a Christen man* of 1549 Much of this treatise belongs to the field of general religious, even doctrinal, instruction, and much of it to the field of practical ethics, but it also contains, as one would expect, some very fine passages on the life of the spirit The following is one of the finest of these:

> I speake of obedience, not that lyeth in the obedience of wordes onely, but whereby the mynde of a man being voyed of the very wysedome of the fleshe or natural man, turneth it selfe al together vnto the becke and pleasure of Goddes spirite Of thys transforming or turning which Paule calleth the renuinge of the mynde, though it be the first enteraunce into life, al the philosophers were ignoraunt, for thei say that reason only ruleth man, onely reason they thynke worthy to be hearde finally to reason onely, they geue & suffre the gouerment or rule of their dedes But christian philosophy biddeth reason to geue place, to obey & be in subiection, vnto the holy gost that man do not nowe hym selfe lyue, but rather beare Christ lyuinge and reigning in hym [1]

Edmund Bunny, it will be remembered, cited Calvin's *Institutions* in answer to Parsons' challenge "Where are your books of devotion?" It is not, taken as a whole, a very damaging rebuttal of Parsons' charge, for it is naturally concerned in the main with problems of doctrine, of organization, and of ethics But it does contain a brilliant chapter on prayer, the twentieth· "Of prayer, which is the chiefe exercise of faith, and whereby we dayly receiue the benefites of God" It is true that it is throughout governed by the doctrinal preoccupations of the Reformer, but at times it seeks a higher flight in a passage like the following "This therefore we get by the benefit of prayer, that we atteyne to those richesses whiche are layed vp for vs with the heauenly father, For there is a certayne communicatyng of men with God, whereby they entryng into sanctuarie of heauen, do in his owne presence cal to him

[1] John Calvin, *Of the life or conuersation of a Christen man*, trans Thomas Broke (London, 1549), sigs C_3-C_3^v

touchyng his promises that the same thyng whiche they beleued him affirmyng only in word not to be vayne, they maye when neede so requireth finde in experience"[2] Obviously, part of the success of this version of Thomas Norton's of 1561, apparently the first English translation of this work to survive, is due to the nervous eloquence and vigor of the English translator's style

Edward Whitchurch's translation of Calvin's *An Epistle both of Godly Consolacion and also of Aduertisement,* published in 1550, should perhaps be noted, too, in this connection But, on the whole, Calvin's influence was of much greater consequence for the fundamental theology and outlook of the English Church than for the range or temper of its devotional literature

For this, Beza's influence, though not exerted until a later date, is probably more important In 1582 the translation by an unidentified I S of Beza's *Christian meditations vpon eight Psalmes of the Prophet Dauid* was published in London The extent of the purely devotional aspects of this book may be not unfairly gauged by the terms of the translator's commendation of the book on the score that "besides the common helpe it brings to all, for more cleare vnderstanding and expounding those eight psalmes it is singularly medicinable to wounded and cast downe consciences, who after their laborsome combat with sinne, and profitable humilation therethrough, may againe by these sweete Meditations arise with ioy, finding happie issue of their troubles"[3]

Like many of his school Beza was suspicious of the higher reaches of the devotional life, for in these same meditations he suddenly asks "In meane while, O Lorde my God, shall I be idle, and finde leysure to do nothing, but onely to occupie my thoughts in contemplation?" And immediately he answers his own question·

> Not so for though he be nothing lesse then idle which exerciseth that part of him selfe receyued from thee, to knowe thee and consider thee in thy word and in thy workes, and that no mans actions can be conducted but by the good discourse and resolution of the spirit, yet forasmuch as man was created at the beginning, and since that time againe made a newe creature by

[2] John Calvin, *The Institution of Christian Religion,* trans Thomas Norton (London, 1561), fol 214

[3] Theodore Beza, *Christian meditations vpon eight Psalmes of the Prophet Dauid,* trans I S (London, 1582), sig A_2

thee the second time, to be a singular instrument in thine hande, it is necessarie that his soule beyng taught by thee, shoulde imploye it selfe, and that instrument which thou hast giuen it, in such actions as are agreeable to thy will, and in that vocation, for which thou hast created it [4]

But this was a suspicion which most of his English readers would probably have shared Certainly, it did not interfere with a welcome that led to a second edition in the next year, 1583

It was not, however, until 1607, apparently, that a collection of prayers from Beza appeared in London, *Maister Bezas Houshold Prayers For the Consolation and Perfection of a Christian Life* This collection of an unknown I B follows the same lines, beginning with a "A prayer vpon the Lords prayer" and "A prayer vpon the Beliefe," and proceeding by means of scriptural citation and explication, that some of the early Puritan books of prayer had followed, a fact which suggests that Beza's work may have been current in some form years earlier There is a certain noble simplicity in the style of these prayers that is quite worthy of the author's explanation of how he came to write the volume·

Now therefore (gentle Readers) feeling my selfe toward the declining euening of dayes, with a tast of so manie solide and permanent ioyes, as are daily to be found in prayer and withall, being inflamed with a desire, to finish the rest of my course, in this sweete labour, which I finde to bee accompanied, with so large a recompence, I haue here formed for my selfe and for any other, that list to reade it, this small manuell, of holy, short, and familiar prayers, grounded vpon the texts of scriptures, such as are indeed, to instruct, comfort, and make vs perfect in faith, loue, constancy, and to be short, in all Christian life [5]

Another French Protestant work to find circulation in England was *The Right Way to Heauen, Prayers and Meditations of the Faithfull Soule with the Spirituall morning Sacrifice and Consolations for the Sick* of Peter Du Moulin, published in 1630 In the preface the unknown translator sets forth the aim of the translation, an aim not entirely innocent of controversial bias, but worth noting because of the reaction against extreme Puritanism implied in the author's definition of it as "the advancement of this part of Gods worship [prayer], so much languishing in the cold if not frozen devotions of many, and opposed by the giddie practice

[4] *Ibid*, sigs B_6-B_6^v

[5] *Maister Bezas Houshold Prayers*, trans I B (London, 1607), sigs B_{11}-B_{11}^v

of mo then a good many, that so far nauzeate Prayer, publike especially, that in their unkindly and misguided zeale, they endeavour by one Ordinance of God to shoulder out another, *Prayer* by *Preaching* "[6] What follows is a very full and competent manual of prayer for all sorts of occasions, both public and private The quality of the work may be seen at its most glowing in the following "Morning Prayer"

> O Light of lights, which hast dispersed the darknesse to bring light into the world, and to give man for a mirrour the beauty of thy works, and the elegant varietie of formes wherewith thou hast distinguisht them, and as thou now bringest upon the earth the brightnes of the day and of the Sun, bringe also Lord, upon my soule the brightnes of thy holy Spirit, that according to the mesure, that my arms shalbe imployed for the maintenance of my body, the thoughts of my soule may be engaged in the invocating of thy holy grace, thorow the conduct wherof wee may walke so on thorough the wayes of this sensuall and corruptible world, that I may not go astray from the celestiall and incorruptible [7]

Bunny cited the *Common places* of Musculus, the famous Public Reader of Divinity of Berne, as another of the Protestant devotional works destined to refute Parsons' disparagement of Protestant devotional literature. But edifying as the *Common places of Christian Religion* must have been for those to whom John Man directed his translation in 1563, "suche as desire the knowledge of Godly truthe," yet this again belongs definitely to the field of ethical instruction rather than devotion.

Nor was Bunny any happier in his appeal to Luther's *A Commentarie vpon the Epistle of S Paul to the Galathians,* to use the title of the very popular English version which still survives in some eight editions from 1574-5 to 1635 Again, the main purpose was doctrinal enlightenment, as the accompanying explanation on the title-page itself reveals

> wherein is set forth most excellently the glorious Riches of Gods grace and power of the gospell, with the difference betwene the law and the gospell, and strength of faith declared, to the ioyfull comfort and confirmation of all true Christian beleeuers, especially such as inwardly being afflicted and greeued in conscience, doe hungre and thirst for iustification in Christ Iesu

[6] Peter Du Moulin, *The Right Way to Heaven* (London, 1630), sigs A_2-A_3^v
[7] *Ibid*, pp 144-145

The work of Philip Melanchthon which John Bradford translated into English and published about 1556 under the title, *A Godlye treatyse of Prayer,* is much more to the purpose of devotion, with earnest and at times glowing words of prayer, but the necessity of securing the fundamental Puritan positions, which he believed, and rightly, to be in serious jeopardy, kept him within the half-controversial vise that held so much of the prayer of the time The following sentence very well shows the strength and the weakness of the result

> Prayer oughte to be made in spyryte, that is to saye, not in hypocrisye, not in the multitude of woordes, and bablinge, but in the godly affections of the heart And it oughte also to be made in truth, that is in the true knowledge of GOD it must be dyrecte and made vnto the true GOD and to the mediatoure Therefore of necessytye the true knowledge of God, and the affection of the heart must be coupled together [8]

It is significant that the German Protestant devotional writer who seems to have been the most popular in England for works of pure devotion belongs to a later generation He is Johann Gerhard, professor of theology at Jena, recognized by 1616 as the greatest living theologian of Protestant Germany As early as 1611 one of his works, translated by Richard Bruch, appeared in London under the title *A Christian Mans weekes Worke Or The dayly Watch of the Soule,* a series of fifty-two meditations, with appropriate prayers, on the main themes of man's spiritual life These were carefully organized so as to afford a series of exercises for a very strenuous week of meditation and prayer Four editions of this work for the years 1611 to 1632 still survive

Still more popular was *Gerards Meditations,* translated and "revised" by Ralph Winterton, Fellow of King's College, Cambridge, and first published in 1627 These meditations are possessed of considerable devotional fervor and energy, as is well shown in the prayer that closes them. "*Let thy Bloud wash us from our sinnes,* and *let thy Resurrection put upon us the Robe of Righteousnes! After thee,* the *true Life,* doe *wee pant and breath,* beeing *dead in sinne After thee,* the *true Righteousnes* doe *wee pant and breath,* beeing *turned away from thee by sinne,*

[8] Philip Melanchthon, *A Godlye treatyse of Prayer,* trans John Bradford (London [1556-7?]), sigs F_6^v-F_7

After thee, the *true Salvation,* doe wee *pant and breath,* beeing *condemned for our sinnes Quicken us, Iustifie us,* and *Save us!*"[9] Between 1627 and 1640 some half dozen editions of this translation were published in London Four years before the first publication of the *Meditations* the same translator had brought out *Gerards Prayers Or A Daily Practise of Pietie* The nature of this work is well indicated by the description on the title-page "*Divided into foure Parts* 1 Of *Confession* of Sinnes 2 Of *Thanksgiving* for benefits 3 Of *Petitions* for our selves 4. Of *Supplications* for our neighbors" First printed with the *Meditations* in 1631, this work had run through at least seven editions before 1640, a fact which points to a very considerable degree of popularity for what is a thoroughly and unimpeachably Protestant book of devotion

Perhaps, some mention should be made here of a type of religious literature that, while not in a strict sense devotional, is yet aimed not at instruction but at edification It is the equivalent of the saint's life, so popular in all ages of Catholic devotion The Protestants of the sixteenth century had repudiated the saint's life because of what had come to seem its inevitable concomitants of miracle and superstition But they were not blind to the force of the witness of the saint as a specialist in religious experience, and they were not entirely insensitive to the taunt of their Catholic neighbours, "Where then are your saints who may bear witness to the truth of your religion?" Nor were they blind to the imaginative compulsion of a good example upon the hero-loving human heart The result was a whole literature of pious biography, edifying anecdote, and noble example In this literature the stories of conspicuous converts from Catholicism to Protestantism were naturally to be welcomed, not only for the heartening example they afforded but for the hope they gave of further progress to victory for their new side One example of such a witness is to be found in an account of the life of a distinguished Italian nobleman, Galeacius Caracciolus, the Marquis of Vico, who forsook wealth and title and family to live a Protestant in Geneva This work, originally composed by Niccolo Balbani in Italian, had been translated into Latin by Beza Then William Crashaw translated it into

[9] *Gerards Meditations,* trans Ralph Winterton (Cambridge, 1627), pp 322-323

English, and this translation under the breezy title of *Newes from Italy of a second Moses,* etc, was brought out in London in 1608

This fellow-feeling for distressed Protestants in Catholic countries naturally made those Spanish Protestant leaders who were driven out of Spain because of antagonism to Philip doubly welcome in Elizabethan England, where they were made much of by English churchmen out of religious sympathy, and much of by Queen Elizabeth out of spite to Philip One of these Spanish Protestants was that Antonio de Corro whose French-Spanish grammar was translated into English in 1590, and various of whose exegetical and controversial writings were published in London from 1574 to 1586 Another was Perez de Pineda, famous as a Calvinist and as a writer of devotional books His *Epistola Consolatoria,* which J Daniel translated and published in 1576 as *Excellent Comfort to all Christians,* enjoyed wide popularity in England[10] De Pineda's abstention from matter of controversy must have been largely responsible for this immediate vogue, for the works of the first of the Spanish Protestant reformers, Juan de Valdes, in spite of the literary eminence of their style had to wait for an English translator until 1638, when Nicholas Ferrar published his translation of the *Cento y Diez Consideraciones devinas,* a work which the enthusiastic approval of George Herbert made popular It has been suggested that this delay was due to the puritanic character of the Spanish Reformer's work[11]

Another source of deep Protestant interest was to be found in books of devotion as well as controversy and divinity that had been condemned by Catholic authority in Spain and Italy, particularly if they were condemned for leanings to Protestant opinion One example of such interest in an old book was the translation by Thomas James, Bodley's first librarian, of Antonio Brucioli's *A Commentary vpon the Canticle of Canticles,* published at London in 1598 This work had been twice condemned and twice printed at Venice But while such official disapproval is significant for the trend of the doctrine presented, it does not usually mean anything very much out of the ordinary in type or style of devotion In general, then, these cases had best be considered in

[10] Martin Hume, *Spanish Influence on English Literature* (London, 1905), pp 234-238

[11] *Ibid*, pp 241-242

their proper place with other devotional books of Spain or Italy, or whatever the country involved

In all of these borrowings from Protestant and heretical Catholic sources seventeenth century English Protestantism is behaving as we should expect it to behave But it would be a mistake of the first order to assume that our usual picture of the fierce partisanship and intolerance of the seventeenth century does justice to all the facts of the religious situation of the time And especially is this true in the field of devotional books, of which one of the most striking features is the vogue of continental Catholic books in England, both in the original language and in translation

In spite of the aggressive loyalties of the time there seems to have been a great deal of not entirely unfriendly curiosity as to other manners and modes of religion It is heartening to lovers of tolerance and fair play to find that even in the times of bitterest warfare there have been those who could go up into the high places and dispassionately and not untenderly survey the field in which their own hopes and sympathies were engaged Such a one, for instance, seems to have been Sir Edwin Sandys, whose *Europae Speculum, or, A View or Suruey of the State of Religion in the Westerne parts of the World* was officially published in 1629, some twenty-four years after the first printing of a stolen copy At a time when divisiveness was regarded as one of the marks of loyalty, he dreamed of the reunion of Christendom as so possible an ideal as to invite a suggestion of how it might be brought about This early statement of a plan of compromise finds an eloquence of statement in which the modern friends of such a way of reunion might well take pride "Let the one," says Sir Edwin Sandys,

giue ouer theyr worshipping of Images, theyr adoring and offering supplications to Saincts, theyr offensiue Ceremonies, theyr arbitrary Indulgences, theyr using of a language not understood in theyr deuotions, all which themselues will confesse not to bee necessary, to bee orders of the Church and such as at pleasure shee may dispence with on the other side, let the Protestants, such at leastwise as think to purge out that negatiue and contradictory humour, of thinking they are then rightest, when they are unlikest the Papacie, then neerest to God when farthest from Rome, let them looke with the Eye of Charitie upon them as well as of seueritie, and they shall find in them some

excellent orders for gouernment, some singular helpes for an encrease of godlinesse and deuotion, for the conquering of sinne, for the perfecting of vertue, and contrariwise in them selues looking with a more single and lesse indulgent Eye than they doe, they shall find that there is no such absolute or unreproueable perfection in theyr doctrine and Reformation, as some dreamers in the pleasing view of theyr owne actions doe fancie Neyther ought they to thinke it straunge, they should bee amisse in any thing, but rather a very miracle, if they were not so in many [12]

There must have been even in those troubled days many men who shared Sir Edwin Sandys' point of view, men who read the literature of the other side, not alone to confute and reject, but also to widen and to complete and to better their own They would be the very ones to turn with relief and interest from the inescapable turmoil of controversy to the serener, ampler fields of devotion, where the devout spirit may strive to reach the God whom all worship on those fundamentals of meditation and prayer on which most Christians are more agreed than they always realize

Fortunately for the spirit of tolerance it was the very age to tempt Englishmen to look abroad, especially to the Catholic countries on the Continent For the sixteenth century was on the Catholic side one of the most prolific in the history of western mysticism, and the seventeenth, for England a greater century from the mystical point of view, indeed, the greatest since the fourteenth century, was for Europe at large only second to it That intensifying of spiritual life which followed the cleansing and revival of the Council of Trent naturally left its imprint upon Catholic devotion, and in that field it reaped its harvest in a series of notable mystics and masters of the devotional life in Spain and France and Italy. Flanders, that earlier home of mysticism in the communities of the Brethren of the Common Lot, had been practically eliminated from the field by the troubles of the Reformation, when the necessity of taking sides in a quarrel in which both parties with some show of reason claimed their allegiance had forced the brethren of Jan van Ruysbroeck and Thomas à Kempis to give up some of the most distinctive features of their tradition But the mystical efflorescence of the Latin countries more than made up for their eclipse

[12] Sandys, *op cit*, pp 196-197

As always Italy took a conspicuous part in this development, but in spite of a really great "active mystic," Philip Neri, and a small host of lesser saints and contemplatives, Italy in the sixteenth century can hardly be said to compete with Spain either in range or eminence of mystic achievement For the sixteenth century in Spain is one of the great mystical periods of western history, a period in which out of much confusion and heart-searching several mystics of the first rank emerged, and a host of mystics of only less eminence Of these great sixteenth century mystics an unusually large number had by the end of that century become widely known over Catholic Europe and had come to exercise an influence that was felt even in Protestant countries

On the whole, the devotional and mystical revival came later in France, from 1580 on into the seventeenth century, in a series of great figures, most of whom play some part in that effort to commend religion to the intelligent and cultivated modern world which the Abbé Brémond has recently summed up in the title of "Devout Humanism" For the modern reader Saint Francis de Sales may be taken as the type of this group in somewhat the same way that Teresa of Avila may be taken for the group in Spain While various individuals, notably Francis de Sales and Jean Pierre Camus, were known and appreciated almost immediately in Protestant England, it is probably toward the end of our period that this group begins to exercise anything like the influence which the Spanish mystics had exercised earlier, and by that time various circumstances have conspired to accentuate party lines to such an extent that their influence is very much restricted

The first foreign influence, in point of time, to enrich the development of English devotional literature came from Spain We are so accustomed to the sixteenth century English fear of dominance by Spain and consequent hatred and terror of all things Spanish that we are apt to forget how enthusiastically at certain times during this period England yielded to the influence of Spain The fact that these periods of Spanish influence proved transient in no wise diminishes their significance for the time and the elements for which they were valid In a rough way these periods of influence may be said to coincide with periods of particularly close political association between Spain and England This

was notably true of the residence of the famous Spanish scholar Vives at Oxford, for Vives was the tutor of the Princess Mary Again, the long-drawn-out negotiations in the reign of James I for the Spanish marriage, futile as they were politically and matrimonially, yet revived popular interest in Spain and whetted the interest of cultivated people in things Spanish It will be interesting to examine in some detail this influence as it is revealed in the religious literature of the time

Men of scholarly cultivation could often, of course, read their Spanish books in the original language, and there is a good deal to suggest that during the residence of Vives at Oxford a number of English scholars were moved to acquire the art of reading Spanish The fact that in 1590 John Thorie, "Graduate in Oxenford", published Antonio de Corro's *The Spanish Grammer* "With certeine Rules teaching both the Spanish and French tongues By which they that haue some knowledge in the French tongue, may the easier attaine to the Spanish, and likewise they that haue the Spanish, with more facilitie learne the French and they that are acquainted with neither of them, learne either or both," is suggestive of a prospective public of some extent In a way, the assumption that there were people who might know Spanish without knowing French is still more interesting The existence of a not inconsiderable group of people who read Spanish is also testified to by another circumstance of the same sort This is the presence in the new library which Sir Thomas Bodley was collecting at Oxford of so many Spanish and Portuguese books The first manuscript which is recorded to have been given to Bodley's library is a life of Saint John the Baptist, written in Portuguese by Antonio Pereira in 1591, and presented by that indefatigable martial book-collector, Robert Devereaux, Earl of Essex in 1600 [13]

Sir Thomas Bodley seems to have actually sent an agent into Spain to look for books for him, for in October of 1604 we find him writing to his librarian, Dr Thomas James

> Sir, I had no sooner sent my former letter to the cariar, but Io Bille was returned, who hath bin onely at Seuil but hath brought good stoare of bookes from thens His purpose was at first to haue visited all other like places, and Vniuersities, where any bookes were to be gotten but the peoples

[13] *The Bodleian Quarterly Record*, I, No 12 (Oxford, Feb, 1917), p 331

vsage towardes all of our nation is so cruel and malicious, as he was vtterly discouraged for this time [14]

It is very difficult to be sure just what books were in circulation at any precise time in the past. Certain guesses we may make from general references in contemporary records, and certain fairly assured conclusions we may draw from particular references and citations, still better from imitations and adaptations But such evidence, significant as it is for the individual author or reader, is for the period incomplete and uncertain That is why the library catalogue is so valuable for what we may call presumptive data For the first part of this period we have such a library catalogue, the list of books which were actually in Bodley's library in the year 1620 Anyone familiar with the care which Bodley himself took in the acquisition and the selection of these books, and the care which he enjoined on his librarian, Dr James, in the solicitation and acceptance of gifts will be aware of the worth of such a list, for it represents the kind of book which men of the cultivated and learned classes read and expected other men of the same classes to read Its usefulness is, of course, strictly limited It is, for instance, of great positive value and of very little negative value The fact that a book is on this list is evidence that it was available in England The fact that a book is not is, of course, no proof that it was not in circulation in England. For instance, we know from many other sources that Granada was far and away the most popular Spanish author of the time in England, but in this list he is represented by a single named work in Spanish, and that a quite obscure one, and the ninth volume of the *Opera Hispanicè* published at Antwerp in 1572 In other languages we find his works in Italian (Venice, 1545), a catechism in French, seven works in Latin, and curiously enough, continental English translations of the *Meditations, A spiritual Doctrine,* and *A Memoriall of a christian Life* Apparently, Bodley made no effort to collect popular English translations but devoted himself to books harder to come at

This catalogue contains some several hundred Spanish books, that is books written in the Spanish language That is an import-

[14] Sir Thomas Bodley, *Letters to Thomas James,* ed G W Wheeler (Oxford, 1926), p 118

ant distinction, for of course there are plenty of books by Spanish authors in Latin, but they are another matter Somewhat more than a hundred and fifty authors are represented in this list, and of course many more than that number of volumes, since in a number of instances the only title given is *Obras* In date they range from the beginning of the sixteenth century to 1613, the commonest dates of publication being from 1590 to 1605

In subject-matter these books cover an astonishingly wide range of interest There are a number of books on medicine and its attendant arts, pharmacology, anatomy, and hygiene There are a number on various aspects of law, canonical and secular There is at least one famous book on the art of the courtier, several on statecraft, several on the art of war, a couple on navigation, histories of all sorts, ancient and modern, biographies of kings and saints, and at least one of a rascal, one book on music, one on rhetoric, at least one on a sociological theme, several on mathematics, one on psychology (what we would call vocational guidance today), a good many books of travel, several on geography, and a number of examples of that literary form of which the seventeenth century was so fond, "relations" of divers strange and wonderful events and of public ceremonials, like the funeral ceremonies for King Philip There are volumes of stories, of romances, of poetry There are several Bibles, a number of commentaries on the Bible, several catechisms, a number of books of divinity, a number of religious controversy in all its aspects, a smaller number of books of devotion, and a very few of mysticism It is interesting to note that of all these books that are mentioned by title, about a third have clearly something to do with religion, but only a score or so can be called devotional, and not much more than half a dozen definitely mystical

To the student of mysticism who is seeking evidence of the undoubted influence of Spanish mysticism on English devotion this paucity of mystical books is disappointing And when the names of the writers involved are scanned, the impression is still more disappointing. For the great names of the time, the names with which every student of mysticism is familiar, are almost entirely missing from the list One may find Bordonius' Latin version of Teresa's life, but her own exquisite Spanish is entirely

lacking So one looks in vain for the works of Saint John of the Cross, or of Fray Luis de Leon (the spiritual works of the latter were not published until 1616) Of the half dozen mystical writers whose works are found in this list, three while deservedly well-known in their own day are all but forgotten in this Francisco Arias, whose *Aprovechamiento espiritual* was published in 1602, was a famous Jesuit devotional writer, especially popular in the group of which Augustine Baker was the leader His more interesting (from the mystical point of view) *Exercitium de praesentia Dei* is represented only by the Latin version Christoval de Fonseca, another favorite of the Recusants in France, is represented here by two books, the *De la vida de Christo* of 1597 and the *Del Amor de Dios* of 1596 So is a third favorite of that group, Miguel Alfonso de Carrança, whose *Camino del Cielo* of 1601 is found here. From the point of view of the modern student of mysticism, the most interesting names in the entire list are those of Juan de Avila, whose *Libro Espiritual* of 1604 is recorded here, and Juan de los Angeles, two of whose books are found in this list, the *Lucha Espiritual* of 1602 and the *Dialogos de la Conquista del Reyno de Dios* of 1597 For though not so famous as Fray Luis de Leon, or Juan de la Cruz, or Saint Teresa, Juan de Avila and Juan de los Angeles are still remembered as minor figures in the great flowering of Spanish mysticism

The Latin versions of the Spanish mystics are too long a story for our purpose Suffice it to say that here as in the case of the far more obscure Flemish mystics the scholar could always find the works of a mystic he was interested in if not in a complete Latin version, then in some one of the many books of selections and compendia in which that age abounded. More important and decisive for our purposes are the translations of Spanish authors into English Of course there are at certain times so many that a few outstanding examples will have to suffice

The earliest Spanish writer to attain wide popularity in England seems to have been Guevara His first book of European reputation, the *Libro Aureo,* appeared in 1529 Berthault translated it into French and published his translation under the title of *Liure dore* in 1531 In 1535 Lord Berners published his translation of Berthault's version, *The Golden Boke* In other words, it

took some six years for this book to go from the Spanish original to the English best-seller It took longer for the *Relox de principes,* first published in 1529, to reach, again via the French of Berthault's *Lorloge* of 1540, the English version of North's *Dial of Princes* in 1557 And it took even longer for the *Epistolas Familiares* of 1539 and 1542 to reach their English form, again by way of the French, while the one of Guevara's books that is most interesting from our point of view, the *Misterios del Monte Calvario,* which Guevara published in 1542, did not appear in English until fifty years later in Hellowes' *Mount Calvarie* of 1595 Interesting as the history of Guevara's work is for its suggestiveness for the development of Spanish influence in England, there is no question that whatever religious influence it exerted was far subordinate to the influence of its highly complicated and ornate style on the struggling English prose of the day [15]

The next Spaniard to influence England was Juan Luis Vives, who as preceptor to the Princess Mary and Professor of Philosophy at Oxford enjoyed a very wide reputation in England and no small degree of influence It is generally believed that more than anyone else, he was responsible for the awakening of an interest in Spanish literature that lingered on at Oxford long after his day Somewhere about 1523 he wrote for the instruction of the Princess his *De Institutione foeminae Christianae,* which Richard Hyrde translated into English and published for the first time in 1540. It is said that long after the change in religion women in England went on reading Vives' book as an aid to private devotion [16] Vives' interest was ethical and devotional, with a strong practical bias and very little concern for theological controversies So it is not surprising that in 1540 his *Ad sapientiam introductio* was put into English by the Puritan Sir Richard Morison, nor that when Richard Day and John Bradford came to compose *Queen Elizabeth's Prayer Book,* they should include prayers from Vives' books [17]

But of all the Spanish devotional writers whose works were translated into English, none enjoyed a popularity like that of

[15] For this account of Guevara in England, I am indebted to the doctor's dissertation of José María Gálvez, *Guevara in England,* Kapitel I and II (Weimar 1910)

[16] Martin Hume, *op cit*, p 233

[17] *Ibid*, p 234

Luis de Granada The official approval of the famous *Libro de la Oracion, y Meditacion* bears the date of 1566, and the permission to print, 1569 In 1582 Richard Hopkins, a Recusant exile, published at Paris a translation of this work under the title, *Of Prayer, and Meditation* The work seems to have run through half a dozen editions among the English exiles in France before any effort was made to publish it in England One of the most remarkable things about the 1582 Paris edition of Hopkins' translation is the opening of his dedicatory address: "To the righte Honorable, and Worshipfull, of the fower principall howses of Cowerte in London, professinge the studie of the Common Lawes of oure Realme, Richarde Hopkins wishe[th] the dewe consideration of the holye mysteries of the Christian Religion "[18] Considering the status of Recusant books in London, one wonders precisely how Hopkins expected these prospective pillars of the law to patronize the book so commended to them in defiance of the laws of the land [19] And this curiosity is only the more whetted by the dedication of Hopkins' next venture, Granada's *A Memoriall of a Christian Life,* to the same involuntary patrons with the following explanation·

> Vnderstanding by good intelligence, of the general wel liking, and gratefull acceptation, that your Honours and worshippes haue had, of the *Boke of Meditations,* of the reuerend Religious father F *Lewis de Granada,* published of late by me in our English tongue, and dedicated vnto you, I haue bene thereby much the rather prouoked to dedicate also vnto you this boke of the same Godlie Awthor, intituled *a Memoriall of a Christian life.* which among all his bokes of deuotion is accompted most profitable for all sortes of Persones [20]

Then Hopkins goes on to attribute the responsibility for that increase in the moral difficulties of the age which all the Reformers complain of to their rejection of confession, penance, and mortification, and to lay the callousness of sinners to the security and presumption which come from resting all one's hopes of salvation upon the cross of Christ alone [21] In other words, however

[18] Luis de Granada, *Of Prayer and Meditation,* trans Richarde Hopkins (Paris, 1582), sig *₂

[19] Hooker quotes a passage from this translation in "A Learned Discourse of Justification "

[20] Luis de Granada, *A Memoriall of a Christian Life,* trans Richard Hopkins (Rouen, 1586), p 3

[21] *Ibid*, pp 21-23

free of controversy his author may be, in this address to the present and future lawyers of England Hopkins plunges boldly into some of the most passionate controversies of his day If Hopkins had not been misinformed or was not exaggerating whatever encouragement he had received, then the young Recusants, John Donne and his unfortunate younger brother, must have been far from the only scions of distinguished Recusant families to be found in the Inns of Court It is an obscure matter, but a very interesting one

If Hopkins' version of Granada's *Of Prayer and Meditation* enjoyed any considerable popularity, that would probably account for the printing of a carefully amended edition of the same translation in London The edition which the present writer has seen is dated 1599, but Meres in his 1598 translation of *The Sinners Guyde* mentions an earlier anonymous translation of Granada's *Meditations*, so it is probable that the 1599 edition is the second [22] This time the dedicatory address is inscribed to one man, to "M William Dethick, Esquier, Garter, and principall King at Armes," but it is not signed A somewhat ambiguous warning may have reference to the circulation of Hopkins' translation, but if so, it seems needlessly oblique [23] There is no question that the unknown editor of this edition was a sound Church of England man, for the various omissions and recastings are quite in line with what we have seen in the case of other adaptations of Catholic books to Protestant ends And anonymous as it was, it seems to have proved very successful, for Elizabeth All-de expressly labels her 1633 edition the seventh It is the sort of collection of simple, straightforward prayers and meditations, arranged with special reference to the occasions of every day in the week, that would make a very effective manual of prayer for the practically devout who took the duty and opportunity of private prayer seriously It is obviously a descendant, direct or indirect, of the mediaeval Primer, and in all probability an important source of influence for a good many of the seventeenth century manuals of prayer

Bound up with the 1599 edition of this anonymous adaptation of Hopkins' version is Granada's *An Excellent Treatise of Con-*

[22] Pollard and Redgrave note a London edition of 1592

[23] Luis de Granada, *Of Prayer and Meditation* (London, 1599), sig A_8^v

sideration and Prayer, evidently from the hand of the same editor The next of Granada's works to become current in England was the famous *Guia de Pecadores,* which Francis Meres, "Maister of Artes, and student in Diuinitie," "perused and digested into English" and published in the year 1598 The sub-title is typical of the age and revealing of the reasons for the popularity of the work in days which must have seemed to many as they did to Meres in the lively dedicatory epistle of the book, very "dog-daies of the Church and Religion, which together with learned Diuines & worthy schollers, doe lie in a desperate *Paroxisme,* and most dangerous fit, ioyntly shaken and assaulted by wicked Patrons and wretched Atheists "[24] In view of that attitude of the author toward his audience his description must have seemed rather pointed "A Worke Contayning the whole regiment of a Christian life, deuided into two Bookes wherein Sinners are Reclaimed from the By-path of Vice and destruction, and brought vnto the high-way of euerlasting happinesse " The treatise itself is at once a work of general instruction and edification and at the same time of practical suggestion for the reform of the inner life Chapters on those favorite themes of seventeenth century religious instruction, the Excellencie of Divine Perfection, the Benefit of our Creation, or the Inestimable Benefit of Divine Predestination, are followed by chapters of Remedies for Pride, Covetousness, Luxury, Envy, Gluttony, and so forth, and then by a chapter very attractively labelled "Of other shorter remedies against all kind of sinnes, but most especially against the seauen capitall sinnes "[25]

Later in the same year, let us hope encouraged by a kind reception at the hands of the patron to whom he dedicated his first venture, Sir Thomas Egerton, Meres brought out a more ambitious undertaking, a translation of *Granados Deuotion,* "Exactly teaching how a man may truely dedicate and deuote him selfe vnto God," etc This is a far more profoundly inward and even mystical work than the practical ethical instruction and exhortation of the *Sinner's Guide* Again, Meres' introduction is interesting, for he shows at once his ignorance of the general field to

[24] Luis de Granada, *The Sinners Guyde,* trans Francis Meres (London, 1598), sig A_2^v
[25] *Ibid*, p 424

which this book belongs and a very lively sympathy with the purpose of the author, a much more intelligent sympathy than most men in England at that time would have been capable of His ignorance is to be seen in the statement of the *Epistle Dedicatory* that "this Author almost 2000 yeeres after the re-creation of the world, is the first that writ a particuler Tractate of *Deuotion*,"[26] and the intelligence of his sympathy in the enthusiastic praise of the work in the address

> Heauenly and exact I also terme this worke, both for the matter, and the manner of handling it The matter teaching how a soule may soare vp to heauen, & there be vnited to God, and for euer liue in his presence, where is fulnesse of ioy, and plentye for euermore And the manner so exactly and methodically discoursing and discouering the whole matter, that unlesse a man will bee wilfully negligent and idle, and sitte as a stone upon a stone, he cannot but enter into the Theater of Gods house, and there meditate on the wonders of the Lord all his life long[27]

This panegyric itself in a very much telescoped and garbled form plagiarizes a beautiful passage toward the end of Granada's book Set side by side with Meres' adaptation, the passage itself suggests very dramatically the degree of illumination to which Granada could on occasion rise, and to which Meres obviously could not

> Let not a man sitte as a stone vpon a stone, but let him behoulde and obserue all those thynges, whych are done vpon y^e^ great stage & huge Theater of the house of God, which alwaies bringeth forth some nouel, which we may meditate vpon There be others also more free to whome God hath shut the vaine of too much speculation, and hath opened the vayne of affection, that the will by a quyet and peacable vnderstandinge may bee recreated and made merrye in GOD alone, bestowing it selfe wholye vpon the loue of the cheefest good
>
> This is the moste perfecte estate of contemplation, to which we must alwayes aspire, in which a man doth not seeke as in the way, set on by the meditation of loue but in which as in his country he doth now enioy his desired loue, being nowe found, and in this he resteth as in his end, saying with the Spouse, *I haue found him whom my soule loueth, I tooke hold on him, neither will I let him goe* In this state of meditation, both the labour is lesse, and the ioy and profit greater[28]

[26] *Granados Deuotion Exactly teaching how a man may truely dedicate and deuote himselfe vnto God and so become his acceptable Votary*, etc trans Francis Meres (London, 1598), sig A_4

[27] *Ibid*, sigs A_4v-A_5

[28] *Ibid*, pp 563-565

But in spite of the glow of this final adjuration, it should be noted that again this treatise belongs to the class of highly practical spiritual direction rather than to the province of the mystic rhapsody It was not for nothing that it was Granada who became popular in England and not Fray Luis de Leon, It is a pity that by the time the spiritual works of Saint John of the Cross were published in Spain in 1616, this interest in Spanish religious literature had in England pretty much spent itself.

One more book of Granada's has come down to us in the English translations of this period and should be noted *The Flowers of Lodowicke of Granado The first part In which is handled the conuersion of a sinner* The translator, "T L Doctor of Phisicke" [Thomas Lodge], notes that he made his translation from the Latin This was in 1601.

Other works of Granada, notably *A Spiritual Doctrine*, seem to have achieved wide popularity in translation among the Recusant English on the Continent, but they do not seem to have aroused much interest in England itself The reason is probably that they are more exclusively Catholic in subject-matter, also possibly that the translations of Granada's work already in circulation satisfied whatever demand could not be satisfied by the Recusant translations or the originals

Granada was by no means the only Spanish devotional writer to find a hearing in seventeenth century England as distinguished from sixteenth century England, but as the century goes on, the problem of acknowledged borrowing becomes less simple so far as public opinion is concerned Hooker could quite unabashedly quote a Recusant translation of some Spanish devotional writer, Meres could quite triumphantly display the treasures he had garnered from a Spanish Catholic writer But in spite of waves of Spanish sympathy, influenced a good deal by political exigencies, and in spite of special cases when the Spaniard seemed even less of a devil than the more immediately threatening Puritan, seventeenth century translators are a little less unconscious of what they are doing We have a very good example of greater wariness, in the address to the reader which one "T M of Magdalen Colledge in Oxford" prefaced to his translation of Christian de Fonseca's *Deuout Contemplations Expressed in two and Fortie Sermons*

vpon all yᵉ Quadragesimall Gospells, printed in London by Adam Islip in 1629 T M begins by commending the work to his reader in the following ingratiating terms·

> The whole Booke is nothing but a bunch of flowers collected from out those pleasant Gardens, which were long since planted by the art and industrie of those reuerend Fathers, whom God raised up for Guardians to his Church, during hir nonage and minoritie "[29]

But then he recollects that there are those who may object to the book because it is the work of a Spaniard, so to them he addresses the following plea

> "But what, shall not the corne be reaped because there's cockle in the field? Meane while accept of this, and let it be thy Christian joy, That the lisping Ephramite is heard here to speake as plaine as the smooth-tongued Canaanite, and that there is not so great a distance betwixt Hierusalem and Samaria, as some imagine "[30]

As for the greatest Spanish mystic of the time, there seems to have been no effort in England to translate her work during this period Of course the name of Saint Teresa was well-known in England among people interested in mysticism Nor was it difficult for any educated person of the time to find out all he wished to know about her As early as 1601 there was a French translation of the *Interior Castle,* and in 1611 an English translation of her autobiography was published by a Jesuit in Antwerp An Italian translation of Father de Ribera's life of Teresa was published at Rome in 1601, while Bordonius' *Vita B Matris Teresae,* published in 1603, was available for all the learned The publication of the *Acta Authentica Canonizationis* at Vienna in 1628, naturally carried the story of her life far and wide, for there is considerable evidence of great interest in England at this time in the pomp and ceremony of Rome The publication of A Collaërt's series of twenty-five plates illustrative of the life of Saint Teresa also served to spread interest in the remarkable daughter of Avila Finally, here as elsewhere, one is much impressed by the great part which the general circulation of information played in the intellectual life of the period News travelled more slowly in the seven-

[29] Christian de Fonseca, *Deuout Contemplations,* etc trans T M (London, 1629) sig $*_3^v$

[30] *Ibid*, sig $*_4$

teenth century than it does now, but none the less surely And the power to make vivid and almost first-hand use of data gleaned from conversation which always impresses the student of Shakespeare as so remarkable seems to have been in no small degree a characteristic of the age

For the most part the influence of the great devotional movement of the end of the sixteenth and the first half of the seventeenth century in France reached England at a later period than the one we are studying. It is commonly said that the frail beauties who flocked back to England with Charles II in 1660 came well if somewhat incongruously supplied with the French devotional books that were the fashion of the brilliant society which they had just left That was one of the triumphs and the penalties of the effort which the devout humanism of Saint Francis de Sales and Jean Pierre Camus had made to commend Christian piety to the world of fashion and cultivation Another triumph of the same somewhat mixed nature, which would doubtless have half-distressed, half-amused the saintly author, is to be found in the typically eighteenth century preface of a 1701 edition of the *Introduction to a Devout Life,* which commends to contemporary piety this masterpiece of one of the greatest of French mystics largely because it "does not run into the mystical Stuff of *Teresa, Blosius, Sancta Sophia,* etc "[31]

The *Introduction to a Devout Life* of Saint Francis de Sales was translated into English and published at Douai in 1613, only four years after its first publication in French This translation must have been very successful, for the 1614 edition, published by Cardin Hamillon at Rouen in the next year, bears on its title page the unusual note of the edition, the third The translation is the work of J. Yakesley, and it is dedicated to Anne Roper, the great-granddaughter of Sir Thomas More. As usual, the author of the translation had an eye to its circulation in England, for he says in his address that the fact that no book so well leads to devotion as this made him desirous "to translate it painfullie, for the benefit of manie soules in our poore distressed countrie ? which

[31] *Introduction to a Devout Life By Francis Sales, Bishop and Prince of Geneva Translated and Reformed from the Errors of the Popish Edition To which is perfixed A Discourse of the Rise and Progress of the Spiritual Books in the Romish Church,* by William Nicholls (London, 1701), "The Discourse," sig A_8^v

more then any other countrie, standeth in need of such good bookes, for counterpoisons against so manie venemous writings, as worldly & fantasticall heads do daylie publishe "[32] What is curiously enough labelled the "last edition" of Yakesley's translation was published at Paris in 1637

In 1648 another continental English edition of the *Introduction to a Devout Life* appeared at Paris, the famous "New Edition, set forth by the English Priests of Tourney Colledge" This was the version that after at least one and probably several intermediate editions was finally published, with minor changes, in London by Henry Hills, printer to the King, in 1686 It need hardly be added that such publications as this did not help James II to hold his throne

From 1613 on, then, the *Introduction to a Devout Life* must have been quite the most popular of all devotional best-sellers among the Catholic exiles in France, and from what one has already learned of the movements of seventeenth century books, one of the most popular of Catholic books for those who kept in touch with such literature. It is said, for instance, that Marie de Medici had a copy of the *Introduction to a Devout Life* bound in gold and gems and sent to James I [33]

The vogue of the *Introduction to a Devout Life* was on the Continent quite paralled by the popularity of another of Francis de Sales' works, *Of the Love of God* According to his own account Thomas Carre translated it as soon as the French original came into his hands.[34] That was the eighteenth French edition, and Carre published his translation in 1630 So for a book first published in 1616 that means a very unusual measure of popularity, but there is no indication that any English edition of this work came out in London Nor is there any evidence that the *Delicious Entertainments of the Soule,* which a "Dame of our Ladies of comfort" translated, and which Pynson published at Douai in 1632, crossed the Channel in this period

But as early as 1616, three years after the first publication of Yakesley's translation at Douai, Nicholas Okes printed for

[32] Saint Francis de Sales, *An Introduction to a deuoute Life,* trans J Yakesley (Rouen, 1614), sig A_2

[33] J E Kempe, *Compnaions for the Devout Life,* etc (Lodnon, 1875), p 53

[34] Saint Francis de Sales, *A Treatise of the Loue of God,* trans Thomas Carre (Douai, 1630), sigs A_3 A_3^v

Walter Burre in London an edition of *An Introduction to a Devout Life* with no indication of translator or editor There seems to have been no difficulty about this edition, although all the evidence points to its being merely an adaptation of the continental version But in 1637 Okes got into difficulties with an attempt to print for W Brooks a translation of *An Introduction to a Devout Life* which cannot now be identified But it is certain that it was one of those current in Recusant circles in France, and likely that it was Yakesley's, which was reprinted at Paris in that year. The publisher submitted the manuscript to the censor, in this case the chaplain of the Archbishop of Canterbury, who expurgated the text of all "popish" passages, but when the book was published, it was discovered that the text was the unexpurgated original. The result was of course the immediate suppression of the edition and the confiscation of all copies to be burnt Apparently authority was not able to find the translator, so the publisher was promptly laid by the heels [35] And to judge from what seems to be the fact that no copies of this edition survive, the suppression must have been effective But the spirit and the influence of *An Introduction to a Devout Life* are to be caught in many a page of the English devotional books of the time, in a sudden flash of tenderness, in a swift heightening of color in a sober passage

The case of Camus is not so interesting for this study because, although the purpose of the extraordinary collection of stories which the Bishop of Belley recounted was the essential purpose of devout humanism, to charm the world to Christ and to righteousness, the general effect of the stories is hardly devotional Perhaps that is why they were so popular in seventeenth century England At any rate the bishop could not only write of worldly romance in a fashion to delight any Puritan, with just the right fervor of pain and grief and shock, but he could also tell a story with a gusto and a vivacity and an elegance that would charm any worldling To the modern mind the effect is not so edifying as the good bishop intended, and one has a suspicion that no small part of their popularity was due to the good conscience they gave the lovers of worldly romance in the satisfaction of their profane

[35] *By the King, A Proclamation for calling in a Book, entituled, An Introduction to a Devout Life* (London, 1637), *Proclamations, Declarations, etc 1542-1688* (in the British Museum), No 13*

tastes Indeed, one of the Bishop's translators, a Major Wright, expressly states on his title-page that the translation was made as his recreation during his imprisonment[36] One can only hope that other Cavalier prisoners were able to beguile their leisure as pleasantly. At any rate, from 1639, when Du Verger's translation of a selection of the *Admirable Events* was published, to be reprinted apparently within the year, to the end of our period various works of Camus appeared in England

From Holland the greatest purely devotional influence is, of course, that of Thomas à Kempis, already noticed in the preceding chapter Of Jan van Ruysbroeck, Thomas à Kempis' great fellow-countryman and fellow-mystic, no translation into English seems to have been made until recent times But all of his works now known were available for scholars in the standard Latin translation of Surius, published at Cologne in 1552 What is probably the best-known of Ruysbroeck's works, the *Adornment of the Spiritual Marriage,* was made available for general readers in French as early as 1606 But broadly-speaking, in seventeenth century England Holland was better known as the source of radical Inner Light documents, like the tracts of the Family of Love, than as one of the great sources of classic Christian mysticism Indeed, it is not without significance that in *A Dispute betwixt an Atheist and a Christian,* published in London in 1646, the Atheist is expressly made a Fleming

For the contribution of Italy to the material of this translation literature, probably the item most deserving of attention is that transmigration of Gasper Loarte's *The Exercise of a Christian Life* through the Jesuit Parsons to the Anglican Bunny's *A Booke of Christian Exercise,* the history of which will be studied in detail in a later chapter In the various transmutations of this book Italy contributed one of the most popular and influential of all the English books of devotion of this period It is also interesting to note that so fervent a contra-Romanist as Dr James, whom Sir Thomas Bodley chose for his first librarian, devoted himself to a translation of *A Commentary vpon the Canticle of Canticles* by the Italian Antonio Brucioli and published his translation in 1598 in London It should be noted in fairness to the redoubtable Dr

[36] Jean Pierre Camus, *The Loving Enemie,* trans Major Wright, (London, 1650)

James that Brucioli's work had been condemned twice by the Church For the most interesting figure in the later sixteenth century religious life of Italy, Philip Neri, all we can be sure of is that the facts of his life and his general point of view and purpose were widely known All the allusions which John Donne makes in his sermons bear out this conclusion It is likely that his greatest influence was by way of precept and example, as witnessed by seventeenth century visitors to Italy and reported to friends back home The beauty of the music at the Vallicella, for instance, is one of the themes of seventeenth century travellers' letters And it is not impossible that the community life of the Oratory was in some degree responsible for the inspiration of that unique experiment in Protestant monasticism, Nicholas Ferrar's Community at Little Gidding. The interest of this same little Gidding Community in Italy is attested by the fact that there are among the hymns preserved in the *Proceedings* of the Little Academy at Little Gidding English translations of some of Jacopone da Tode's poems which have been assigned by one Ferrar student at least to Nicholas Ferrar himself [37]

When all is said and done on this matter of Protestant English translations of Catholic works, there is an abundance of evidence to support what a later translator of Saint Francis de Sales says "Notwithstanding the great and deserved aversion which this Nation has to Popery, yet the Books of their Divines upon Devotional and Practical Subjects, have met with as favorable reception among Us, as if the Authors had been of a better Religion "[38]

[37] H P K Skipton, *The Life and Times of Nicholas Ferrar* (London, 1907), p 109

[38] Saint Francis de Sales, *Introduction to a Devout Life*, trans Nicholls, sig A_8

CHAPTER V

Recusant Devotional Literature

An even keener test of English broad-mindedness and a more important source of enrichment was to be found in a body of literature to which as yet very little attention has been paid English Catholic fugitives and exiles who gathered at various continental centres, particularly in the colleges and convents and monasteries that had been established as refuges for them in Spain, Holland, and France, constituted what must in any effort to gauge the devotional forces of the time be regarded as practically a separate nation For movingly English as these men often reveal themselves in their writings, they were after all cut off from the main stream of the life of their people, a tragic deprivation to any Englishman of that age Moreover, they were devoted to the preservation of traditions upon which their people seemed largely to have turned their backs Finally, by the very circumstances of their case they were more intimately exposed to various continental influences than were their Protestant countrymen at home For all these reasons, they may be taken to constitute a separate national group, distinct both from the Catholic communities on the Continent that gave them asylum and from their Protestant fellow-countrymen in England

From the point of view of the student of the inner life of the time it is a very interesting group, although in so many ways an obscure one and likely to remain so It does not contribute an important episode to the cultural history of a great people as does the "Devout Humanism" of the same century in France, nor does it produce any mystics that are clearly of the first rank It seems to have been peculiarly a women's group, or to be more exact, a group in which the interest and patronage of women played a remarkably important part The confessors to the various convents of nuns at Paris, Douai, Rouen, Cambrai, to name a few,

seem to have furnished a large proportion of the leaders in the work of translation Of course this may be in part explained by the fact that translations were likely to be more necessary for the women than for the men But from all the data available it would seem that the audience to whom Augustine Baker looked when he composed his own original mystical works in English was to no small extent feminine The reason is probably that the arduous adventures of the English mission engaged the majority of the men, while women of corresponding fervor, deprived of that intimate and rich contact with their own people immediately around them which is one of the features of Spanish conventual life that most impresses the reader of Saint Teresa's autobiography, turned not unnaturally to an intensive cultivation of the life of prayer Cut off as so many of them were not only from country and friends but even from home and family, there was so much for them to pray for and so little that they could do about it but pray! It is not surprising then that this group should take an even deeper interest than do most nuns in the devotional life par excellence, the life of the mystic

Yet it produced no mystic of the first rank Dame Gertrude More with all the prestige of her historic name and a personality of more than common interest and Benet Canfield are known only to the specialist Robert Southwell's name is known chiefly as that of a poet, and in every way he belongs to the preceding generation It is idle to speculate what he would have become had he not achieved so early the martyrdom he coveted Richard Crashaw was one of the greatest poets of the England of his time and a genuine mystic, but he cannot be claimed in any sense as the product of this group, although he had been long exposed to the same influences that molded it, and although in the end he came to join it If the Anglicanism of his day is insufficient for good and evil to account fully for what he became, it is equally true that his nurture was not in the tradition of which he may be counted one of the chief glories From this point of view the most distinguished member of the group is undoubtedly Augustine Baker, a genuine mystic of a very high order Indeed, he is of the race of the greatest mystics As we shall see presently, his mysticism was in concept and in practise that of the greatest of the Catholic mystics of all time,

and his spirit had been richly nurtured on their writings But set him beside Saint Bernard of Clairvaux or Saint Teresa of Avila or his own great namesake, Saint Augustine of Hippo, and it is at once evident that though of the same order of greatness, he is of a far lower degree It is not merely that he lacks the supreme literary gifts of the great mystics just named He is for all his vast erudition less spacious, less rich than they Sound and deep he is, but there is yet something dry about him, something pedagogic rather than prophetic He has fire and beauty, but they are sedulously covered over Great mystical writers may grow overwhelming at times, they often grow to the unregenerate somewhat exhausting, but they are not boring Now there is a very definite limit to what average humanity may take at a time of Father Augustine Baker He does grow a little heavy and tedious, and the reader is too often forced to remind himself that he is a very good and a very wise man who is going on at such length But when this is said, all is said that it is necessary to say on the negative side

And it must be remembered that it is not entirely fair to judge so accidental a matter as this of tone and temper without some regard to the milieu in which the man was working Mysticism is a perilous thing It is in so much danger, to begin with, of attracting the wrong kind of people for the wrong reasons It ministers so easily to the love of the esoteric, the marvelous, even the magical. Like every other level of religious activity it has always been the prey of that weakness in human nature that craves a short-cut to self-approval, a vindication of too well-known infirmities The seventeenth century enjoyed no immunity from these any more than any other of the enduring weaknesses of man's nature *The Life of the Blessed Virgin, Sainct Catharine of Siena,* which John Fen, priest and confessor to the English nuns at Louvain, translated from the Italian of Doctor Caterinus Senensis in 1609, is a very good example of the kind of danger with which mysticism is constantly beset even among sincerely religious and moderately intelligent people In a good many ways this particular book is not a bad one at all, even its worst fault, its stress on marvel and vision, may be somewhat condoned when one remembers that its purpose is to hearten people who had abundant rea-

son for being discouraged and to help them to face a hard world with faith in a God who in times past had so singularly authenticated the virtues of his saints Yet Catherine of Siena herself would have regretted the emphasis of a book which said so much of what she would have considered at best secondary and incidental and so little of those ineffable experiences which are the mystic's excuse for being

Another example of the sort of thing which should be borne in mind when we try to judge the mysticism of this group is a book which came out toward the end of this period, a book which represents tendencies always just around the corner when any considerable body of people become interested in mysticism It is *The Holy Practises of a Deuine Louer, Or The Sainctly Ideots Deuotions,* published at Paris in 1657 It is the work of Dame Gertrude More, one of Augustine Baker's disciples, probably his most gifted It is obvious that the author has been very well grounded in certain aspects of Baker's method, but her temper is at the opposite pole from her master's The book is expressly directed to those who in the author's words

> feruently and simply with all their affections, desire to *aspire* after *God* and the *Clowd of faith and feelings of Loue* without troubleinge themselues with busye and impertinent operations of the vnderstandinge, commonly called Meditations or discourses of the vnderstandinge, to moue & excite the will, which in the case of these deuine & Seraphicke Ideots, are superfluous, they beinge alreadye sufficiently, yea aboundantly excited and bent to loue *God,* and practise vertue, through their *light of Faith, which* telleth and assureth them, that all is vanitye of Vanities, *but, Only to Loue and serue God,* and their owne innate *Propension* inclininge them to this *end,* and not sufferinge them to rest contentedly any way else, or in any thinge else, and this natural propension strenthned & promoted by the habit of supernatural deuine Charitie, *makes them runne the wayes of the Commandments of God he dilating their Harts* [1]

The woman who wrote that sentence is still herself this side heresy, but any disciple of hers who should come under the disintegrating influence of Quietism would find himself a sadly confused man.

In general, modern thought is either indifferent or wildly enthusiastic about mysticism The seventeenth century for all its faith was more discriminating It had at least as much reason to

[1] [Dame Gertrude More,] *The Holy Practises of a Deuine Louer, Or The Sainctly*

be However avid some pious ladies of the time might be of miracles, and however avid of marvels most Protestants believed all Catholics to be, there must have been far more of the critical spirit even in the intensely religious Recusant society of the Continent than is usually supposed For the same anxiety that the fervor of true mysticism be not confused with the frenzy of false mysticism, that is so recurrent a note in the life and writings of Saint Teresa is to be found in the preface which Serenus Cressy, one of the most enlightened of Baker's disciples, wrote to his well-known summary of his master's teachings, the *Sancta Sophia.* Cressy was afraid that Baker's belief that "the Diuine Spirit by vertue of the sayd Operations is to be acknowledged our onely secure Guide and Maister in these Secret Pathes of Diuine Loue,"[2] would be misunderstood These operations Baker had already defined as "Diuine Illuminations, Inspirations, Impulses and other Secret Operations of Gods Holy Spirit in the Hearts of Internal Livers"[3] But his editor feared embarrassment on this score, as he explained, "partly from ordinary and *not learned Catholicks,* who, it is suspected, will be suspicious of a *Doctrine* that will seeme new, and however unproper to them: but principally from *strangers* & *Enemies* to the Church, especially the frantick Enthusiasts of this age who, as is feared, will conceiue their frenzies and disorders iustified here."[4] It is again that problem of the Inner Light, which haunted every church and sect of the time that ventured beyond the barest bones of duty and obedience.

There is then a caution and a common sense about the mysticism of this group, that contrasts a little oddly perhaps with the reputation which their adversaries sedulously fostered of grim fanaticism There is another thing, too, that is very characteristic of this mysticism, and that is its scholarliness, its rich grounding in tradition, with at the same time a certain eclecticism, the eclecticism of the well-read scholar These people are experts in their field beyond the degree of most practising mystics This is prob-

[2] *Sancta Sophia, or Directions for the Prayer of Contemplation Extracted out of more then XL Treatises written by the late Ven Father F Augustin Baker, And Methodically digested by the R F Serenus Cressy, And printed at the Charges of his Conuent of S Gregories in Doway* (Douai, 1657), I, ii-vi

[3] *Ibid*, I, iii

[3] *Ibid*, I, iii

ably no accident By the very nature of the case the Recusants who fled from the innovations and the compromises of their own land to the cloistered refuges of the Continent were men to whom ancient tradition and spiritual continuity were especially dear Moreover, cut off as they were from many of the normal contacts which build up the spiritual context of human life, they not unnaturally made more of their books than most men, and under the influence of that book world, enriched by various international contacts more potent for the exile than for the citizen, the bonds of nationality even in that intensely national group tended to relax Whether or not this be the reason, one feels a greater cosmopolitanism in the mystical studies of these men than in any others of the time.

Especially is this true of Augustine Baker Baker like so many of the Recusant leaders was a man of education. Born at Abergavenny in 1575, he was sent at the age of eleven to Christ's Hospital and when he was about fifteen to Broadgates Hall, Oxford From there he went to Clifford's Inn and to the Middle Temple. In 1604 he was admitted to the Benedictine Order. The years that followed were years of vivid and even crushing spiritual experience After various episodes of desolation he was finally saved from despair by reading the *Speculum Perfectionis* of Heimerus As he himself tells the story, his conversion took place in his thirty-second year Beginning with a few hours of prayer a day and gradually lengthening that time to five or six hours a day, within the space of sixteen months' time he reached contemplation His description of his first taste of that high experience is worth quoting, for its quiet terms are so profoundly revealing of his temper

> The said contemplation fell to our scholar in the forenoon, about eleven of the clock, and before he had eaten anything He had—according to his wont—spent the forepart of that morning in his mental prayer that had been somewhat long and continued, and having given it over then the spirit of prayer came upon him—as it was wont to do—once or twice afterwards in that same morning And the last time was a little before the said eleven of the clock, whereupon he was raised to the said contemplation This I tell you that you may know my observation and opinion to be that such contemplation comes not usually on a man till after he has been long at his prayer and be come to the height of it, being so far and so high that he can go no farther nor higher And being come to such case God becometh the sole worker, as He is in all

such passive contemplations, the which I suppose that they do not come upon a man at the forepart of his prayer I mean for his first passive contemplation The same contemplation of our scholar lasted not, as I think, above the space of half a quarter of an hour, or at the most but for one quarter of an hour And it was with alienation from senses, I mean, in a rapt [5]

This was in 1607-8 If one can take Baker's own account, and seventeenth century religious autobiography has always to be accepted with considerable reservation when it deals with the author's short-comings, he soon fell from this high estate into one of lukewarmness, in which he continued for some twelve years

Apparently it was during these twelve years that he was ordained priest and first sent on the English Mission, for the end of this period in 1620 found him in Devonshire, a chaplain at the house of one Philip Fursden It was during the years that followed that Baker converted and won his most famous disciple, Serenus Cressy, the chaplain of Lady Falkland The time which he spent in Devonshire must have been quieter than the life to which he was accustomed, for he says himself that a little before the end of the twelve-year period mentioned above, God was pleased to bring him into a "place of some solitude," which gave him a chance to resume those habits of prayer which he seems to feel had lapsed[6] and to complete that course of spiritual reading for want of which his first conversion had failed [7]

Somewhere between 1620, to which he himself assigns the end of his period of lukewarmness, and 1629, the approximate time of the writing of his *Confessions,* Baker's second conversion took place It is likely that it took place near the beginning of this period, for it is of things for some time settled and consolidated that he writes in 1629 Moreover, in 1624 he was called to Cambrai as spiritual teacher to the convent which Crisacre More had founded for his daughter and seven companions The nine years that followed were years of great literary productivity, during which he composed some forty treatises of the life of devotion, only fifteen of which were collections of the work of others At the end of that time he was summoned to Douai, and some four

[5] *The Confessions of Venerable Father Augustine Baker, O S B , extracted from a Manuscript Treatise preserved in the Library of Ampleforth Abbey,* ed. Dom Justin McCann (London, 1922), pp 60-61

[6] *Ibid* , p 87 ff

[7] *Ibid* , p 81 ff

years later, in 1638, he was sent back to the English Mission, on which he died in 1641, in his sixty-sixth year

His special gift seems to have been that of instructing others in the spiritual life This accounts for the pedagogic and hortatory rather than revelatory nature of his confessions and his various treatises, also for the general caution and moderation, even at times impersonality, of his accounts of his own experience He seems to have felt that it was not what was most intimately personal but what was universal in his experience that would be of most value for his pupils Yet now and then the candor of a very honest and fresh spirit breaks through the pedagogic impersonality, as when he says in that delightful sixthly of his account of the consequences of his mystical experiences

> Sixthly, for the pulling down of our scholar's comb, I will and may tell you for a very truth and for his confusion—with his good leave be it spoken—that notwithstanding all that ado that God seemed to have about him in guiding him by the said way that is somewhat extraordinary, yet is he as yet in purity and mortification of soul or sensuality little or nothing advanced or amended, as all they may easily perceive that converse with him and observe his carriage and conversation [8]

These various treatises of the Internal Life, to use the title popular in these groups, which Baker wrote for his pupils were arranged by Baker's brother Benedictine and pupil in what is one of the most systematic and exhaustive treatises of the life of devotion to be found in the history of Catholic mysticism Hugo of Saint Victor, John Gerson, Jan van Ruysbroeck, Saint Teresa, to name a few of the doctors of mysticism—none of these is so meticulously encyclopedic as Baker Logical, orderly, discriminating, detailed, his writings read often like treatises in casuistry, analyzing and discussing every shade of problem of the life of prayer Yet they are never abstract or academic, because they are so steadily focused on the problems of the student who is trying by degrees to realize the ideal of this way of life That fact alone gives Baker's work an extraordinary vitality for all its dryness. It is also the mainspring of that common sense, so characteristic of Baker, which gives these works a peculiarly English kind of practicality Certainly, neither Andrewes nor Donne could find in

[8] *Ibid*, p 103

Baker any sign of that Enthusiasm which was the great bugbear of all moderate Englishmen in the seventeenth century

The other thing that saves Baker's treatises from encyclopedic dullness is the range of allusion and citation that distinguishes his work. The result is a richness of effect that it would never have achieved on its own unaided merit And this richness of effect is entirely deserved, for Baker is not only a consummate master of the theory of his art, but also of its literature, and that, in a field where so much goes by way of contagion rather than precept, is an item of the first importance

To begin with, Baker was familiar with the age-old classics of the mystical tradition of Latin Christianity. Indeed, he was thoroughly acquainted with the Greek writers upon whom the Latin tradition had been reared, with Cassian, with Dionysius the Areopagite, to whom he makes many references in his various works, with Gregory Nazianzen, with Gregory of Nyssa, and most fundamentally of all, with Saint John the Evangelist. Among the Latin writers Gregory the Great and Saint Augustine are favorites constantly referred to, particularly Saint Augustine's *Confessions,* no mean test in that age, of genuine devotional, not to say mystical, interest Among the great mediaeval mystics, he was, like most men of his age who had any sympathy with mysticism, particularly devoted to Saint Bernard But he was also acquainted with other mystical writers of the Middle Ages, with Catherine of Siena, who seems to have been especially attractive to this group, with John Gerson, with the mystical and devotional essays and the prayers of Thomas Aquinas, with Saint Francis of Assisi (he cites Brother Masseo from the *Fioretti* in his commentary on *The Cloud*),[9] and with several less notable figures in mediaeval mysticism and devotion, of whom the most important are Saint Anthony of Padua and Blessed Angela of Foligno For the later Middle Ages, a time not always appreciated in this period, he was especially devoted to Tauler and to Suso, and he seems also to have been acquainted with the great Flemish mystic, Jan van Ruysbroeck, and with his fellow mystic of the Low Countries, Henry Herp, or Harphius, whose *Theologia Mystica,* written in 1478 and

[9] *The Cloud of Unknowing and other Treatises by an English mystic of the fourteenth century With A Commentary on the Cloud by Father Augustine Baker,* ed Dom Justin McCann (London, 1924), pp 384-385

published in 1538, enjoyed wide popularity in that and the succeeding century. For writers more nearly contemporary, he makes constant reference to the great Spanish mystics, not only to Saint Teresa and Saint John of the Cross but also to many others of probably very little less fame then, though now often all but forgotten Antonio de Rojas, Luis de la Puente, Balthazar Alvarez, Granada, Alphonsus Madriliensis, the author of a book called *The Method to Serve God,* the "learned Soto", are other Spanish authorities on the devotional life to whom he appeals for support of various points in his own treatises Not unnaturally, considering his French associations, he refers often to French writers, from Louis de Blois, the famous reforming abbot of Liessies of the first half of the sixteenth century, better known to Protestant and Catholic alike under his Latin name of *Blosius,* down to men actually his contemporaries Among them is of course the bishop of Geneva, Francis de Sales, and his great favorite, Constantin Barbanson, a member of the pioneer Capuchin order in Germany, whose *Sécrets Sentiers de l'Amour Divin,* published at Paris in 1622, soon became a classic It is one of the devotional books to which Baker refers most often and most enthusiastically

One of the most interesting aspects of Baker's learning is his esteem of the English mystics at a time when they were pretty much forgotten at home He was so devoted to *The Cloud of Unknowing,* the masterpiece of an unknown English mystic of the fourteenth century, that he wrote a commentary on it, called the *Secretum,* in which he cites most of his favorite mystical authors from Dionysius the Areopagite to Father Benet Fitch for the support of its conceptions of the mystical life It is from that point of view one of the richest and most interesting of his works In the edition of the *Sancta Sophia* that has been already cited in this chapter he makes reference to *The Cloud* itself some five times. And in the same work he appeals several times to another fourteenth century English favorite, Walter Hilton, the author of the *Scala Perfectionis*

Of his own generation of English devotees of the mystical life he makes constant reference both in the *Secretum* and in the *Sancta Sophia* to one, Father Benet Fitch, alias Canfield, a Capuchin, famous in his generation for his translation into Eng-

lish of the *Sécrets Sentiers* of his fellow-Capuchin, Constantin Barbanson, and for his own book, *Of the Threefold Will of God* It is interesting to note in view of much-advertised inter-order rivalries and animosities that Baker, a Benedictine, drew freely and sympathetically on the works of secular, and Franciscan, and Jesuit, as well as on his own tradition His eye seems to have been so firmly fixed on the practical aspects of his role as a guide to the spiritual life that he seems not at all aware of some of the important differences in tone and direction between the various traditions he used Nor did the matter of time count for him He put the mystic of the fifth and the fifteenth century together, conscious only of the fact that they were saying the same thing on this timeless adventure of the finding of God Nowhere is this singleness of eye better shown than in that passage of the *Sancta Sophia* in which he draws up a list of those books he deems most helpful for the contemplative soul.

> For such soules, the bookes most proper are these following *Scala perfectionis*, written by F *Walter Hilton, the Cloud of vnknowing*, written by an vnknowne Authour *The secret Paths of Diuine loue*, as likewise *the Anatomie of the soule, written* by R F *Constantin Barbanson a Capucin*, The Booke entitled *Of the threefold will of God*, written by R F *Benet Fitch* (alias *Canfield*) a Capucin likewise, The works of *S Teresa*, of *B Iohn de Cruce* likewise *Harphius, Thaulerus, Suso, Rusbrochius, Richard de St Victore, Gerson* etc And of the Ancients, the *Liues of the Ancient Fathers liuing in the Deserts*, & *Cassian his Conferences* of certaine Ancient Hermites (recommended particularly vnto vs by *our Holy father*), *S Basiles Rules*, etc Then for soules that tend to perfection in an Actiue life, Bookes most proper are, The workes of *Rodriguez of perfection*, the *duke of Gandy, Of good workes, Mons de Sales, Ludouicus de Puente*, etc And lastly bookes of a mixed nature are *Granatensis, Blosius*, etc [10]

This list in itself affords a little library on the subject, of admirable scope, at once standard and up-to-date, in the best sense of the word, classic

That this range of learning was not the exclusive possession of the master but rather the epitome of what was more or less current in the group is suggested by the impressive catalogue of "such Bookes as maye much helpe, comfort, and encrease the Deuotion of Contemplatiue spirits, such as are well grounded, &

[10] Baker, *Sancta Sophia*, I, 86-87

instructed alreadie in the Catholike Faith and haue passed through the necessarie rudiments of actiue Preparations" which Dame Gertrude More offers the spiritually ambitious in *The Holy Practises of a Deuine Louer* It is too long to quote in its entirety here, but a selection from the list, arranged as is the original in alphabetic order, will suggest its quality and scope Regardless of the alphabet, it is headed by the loyal disciple's master "All the Venerable Father Augustine Bakers Manuscripts" Then follow the works of Bernard, Bonaventura, Benet Canfield, the *Colloquies* of Saint Catherine of Siena, the *Mystic Diuinity* of Dionysius the Arexopagite, the works of S. Gregory the Great, of Hugo of S Victor, of Harphius, of John of the Cross, John Gerson's *Imitation of Christ,* the works of Ruysbroeck, of Richard of Saint Victor, the *Scale of Perfection,* the life and works of Suso, the *Secret Paths of Diuine Loue,* the life and works of Tauler and of Saint Teresa, and with the customary vague sweep of the seventeenth century at its most business-like, *Vitae Patrum,* which the author evidently writing for the unlearned, immediately translates as the *Liues of the Fathers* [11] The list contributes nothing of importance to Baker's list (it probably was compiled straight from his writings and teachings), but it shows that his mystical scholarship, even if we suppose that it was original with him, was through his influence widely diffused What is more likely is that it represents the culture of a whole group, articulate in a few members of special directorial and literary skill

While groups gathered under the direction of some experienced spiritual director, like the group of English nuns under Augustine Baker at Cambrai, were the center of this devotional movement, it was by no means confined intentionally or unintentionally to those engaged in the monastic life Plenty of evidence that these writers looked to some influence over people in the world and people of very average interest and ability survives in their works, particularly in their translations of other writers Even in so advanced an undertaking as the publication of a summary of Augustine Baker's teachings which the General Chapter of the English Benedictine Order ordered in 1653, the fact that "many among the Secular Clergy of England, yea, that several

[11] [More,] *op cit*, pp 34-37

devout persons of the laity, both men and women, did, to the wonderful profit of their souls, make use of some of the said Treatises," was cited as a reason for the action which the Chapter took [12] And as the treatise called *A Spiritual Life in a Secular State*, recently published from a manuscript at Downside, shows, Augustine Baker had very definitely taken up their case and handled it with his usual application of good sense to the fervor of his time A sentence or two will suffice to define its point of view. The devout layman, he says, is "generally to do all things, w[hi]ch cannot justly or reasonably be omitted by one of his quality or degree But yet performing all these things w[i]thout affection to them, and w[i]thout solicitude about them, so far as he can "[13] Undoubtedly, the devout humanism of contemporary France had its influence on this literature, but there was in the nature of things less scope for such an effort to win the worldly and the learned and the cultivated to piety in the Recusant communities of the Continent or the scattered and obscure and often repressed and fugitive groups still remaining in England than there was in the full tide of French society

Therefore it is not surprising that a good many of these books make very much the same sort of pioneer appeal that is made in Protestant writings of the time in England For instance, the unidentified G F. who published *A Manual of Prayers*, one of the most popular English Catholic manuals of the time, in 1583, probably at Douai, addressed to the "Catholicke and Christian Reader" an exhortation in many respects like those that his Anglican colleagues were to address to the same worthy for the next forty years:

> Most deare Countrymen whose desires are to serue God in holines of life, to the intente that you may proceede dayly from one vertue to another, and to be helped by the labours of God his seruauntes and sayntes, (whoe from time to time to increase the deuotions of the people, haue lefte manye holye prayers and exercyses, as a treasure for to comforte and strengthen the dull soule of man) I haue thought good to collect and translate certayne deuoute prayers verye fitte and conueniente for this time, which is done the more willingly in respecte of the greate and zelouse desire that many of our poore countrye hath, rather to occupye them selues deuoutly by begging

[12] Baker, *Sancta Sophia*, II, 552

[13] *A Spirituall Life in a Secular State being an Addition to the Abridgment of a Spirituall Life by Father Augustin Baker* (Ditchling, 1927), pp 2-3

pardone for their sinnes, then curiously by searching the secrete misteries of God, to spende their time in vnprofitable and insolente contradictions, tendinge to no other ende, but onely to roote out of the mindes of christian catholickes all true fayth, firme hope, and perfecte charitie, which dayly by deuotion and other spirituall exercyses is wonderfully increased, to the greate admiration, euen of the very aduersaries of all pietie and catholicke religion, as doth well appeare to the whole world sence the time that some vertuous, holy & learned men haue applyed some parte of their time in compyling, translating and collecting particular works of deuotion, which in the iudgement of many are presently more necessary, than farther to treate of any controuersie, seeinge that heresie is growen to such rypenes, that the simplest man of all, can now discypher the poyson hid vnder her but deuotion is so decayed that the learned themselues haue neede of helpes for to attayne thereunto [14]

The unspecified author of the translation of Gaspar Loarte's *Instructions and Aduertisements, How to meditate vpon the Misteries of the Rosarie,* etc, which Cardin Hamillon printed at Rouen in 1613, is as the result of the labors of the intervening thirty years more sanguine in his view of the situation· "Albeit the Profite and importance of holye prayer, and meditation of heauenly thinges, hath not bene so wel vnderstoode heretofore, yet is it nowe through Gods good grace so much the better knowen, as it is more vsed"[15]

To judge from the survivors of this literature of popular Recusant devotion to be seen in collections like those of the British Museum and the Bodleian, it was of great variety and of wide scope The translations involved some of the outstanding figures of the time in Italy, France, and Spain Diego de Stella, Francis Arias, Saint Teresa, Peter de Alcantara, Antonio de Molina, Ignatius Loyola are some of the Spanish writers, Saint Francis de Sales, Constantin Barbanson, Louis Richeome, Jean Pierre Camus some of the French, and Gasper Loarte perhaps the most influential of the Italians And the material of these popular books is as varied as the sources from which it comes There is the usual array of saints' lives, good, bad and indifferent, including now and then a masterpiece like a translation of Saint Teresa's autobiography There are treatises of patience and of the contempt of the world, there are essays on prayer and meditation, and

[14] G F, *A Manual of Prayers* ([Douai?] 1583), sigs π_4-π_5

[15] Gasper Loarte, *Instructions and Aduertisements, How to meditate vpon the Misteries of the Rosarie* (Rouen, 1613), p 3

there are practical manuals and collections of prayers and meditations In fact, all the types of devotional literature are generously represented And there is always what one is conscious of in practically all seventeenth century literature, that combination of mediaeval other-worldliness and Renaissance play of the mind over the rich surface of life with now and then a sudden thrust of the sharpened consciousness into the enduring fundamentals of human nature The result is that while this literature is usually austere and fervent, it is neither narrow nor over-wrought It is alertly aware of its time, sometimes curiously modern in a passing protest at the excesses of free interpretation of the Bible, at the controversial strain and temper of so much contemporary religious life Indeed, on some points it is much more modern than almost any religious writing of the time in England Nor is this surprising when it is remembered that many of the problems which led to the type of controversy we are apt to regard as typical of the time in England were not of its making Moreover, it is as a rule keenly aware of the need of self-surveillance, of reasonableness, even, in a certain sense, of moderation As devotion, as mysticism, it is second-rate, but it has its own value and its own beauty, for it springs out of profound and tragic necessity As the preface to the translation of Saint Francis de Sales' *An Introduction to a Deuout Life* which the English priests of Tournai College published in 1648 said "In affliction we commonly return to deuotion, the former our friends in England haue not wanted of late, and we hope they haue had the latter, at least in their desires"[16]

[16] Saint Francis de Sales, *A New Edition of the Introduction to a Deuout Life set forth by the English Priests of Tourney Colledge* (Paris, 1648), sig e_8

CHAPTER VI

Recusant Devotional Books in England

But interesting as this Recusant devotional literature is in and for itself, it would find no place in such an investigation as the present if its influence were confined to the groups in which it originated If it only solaced the exile of the Catholic at Douai or Cambrai, valuable as such an achievement was humanly-speaking, it would have little interest for such a study as this of the devotional literature of England The thing that makes it important for us is that in one way or another it did pass the narrow limits of its fugitive and exiled origins and become one of the potent forces in the molding of the devotional literature of that England which so many of its writers and readers were never again to see And this in spite of the fact that in England all this literature was officially proscribed

Right-mindedness and like-mindedness were definite objectives of seventeenth century polity The more serious-minded portion of the seventeenth century world, particularly that which governed church and state, was apprehensive of the power of ideas, especially among the ignorant Not only their desire for the stability of the institutions to which they were committed but the moral responsibility for the lives of their subjects which they assumed as a divinely appointed duty compelled them to take every possible measure for the protection of their people from erroneous or subversive notions in all phases of government and its surest mainstay, religion The inevitable consequence was the censorship of books, or rather, since there was nothing new in the idea of such a censorship,[1] the enforcement and the strengthening of the existing machinery of censorship The result in a Protestant land was inevitably the exclusion and suppression of Catholic books

[1] Evelyn May Albright, *Dramatic Publication in England, 1580-1640* (New York and London, 1927), p 60ff

Officially, no book touching on religious matters, except such as were published under general letters patent,[2] could be published in England during these years without examination and license But it is a little hard to estimate the degree or manner of enforcement of such a censorship at this distance of time. Like a good many aspects of Elizabethan and seventeenth century penology it seems to the modern mind a somewhat ramshackle affair. It appears to have been intermittent, spasmodic, at times downright cruel Evidences of its ineffectiveness abound At the same time, it is probable that this very ineffectiveness joined to a characteristic lack of any rigor of logic made the whole system seem much less obnoxious, in spite of picturesque burnings of books, occasional whippings, and rare ear-croppings, than a thoroughly consistent or logical procedure would have been

While Catholic books were the most consistently objected to by the censorship and the public opinion back of it, its onus was by no means confined to them. Puritan works were also burned with more or less frequency according to the bias of the responsible authorities. The books of that typically seventeenth century Inner Light sect, the Family of Love, were banned from the country. A nineteenth century compilation of the Index Expurgatoribus Anglicanus lists the works of their supposed founder and leader, Henry Nicholas,[3] with various books and treatises of an apparently Unitarian tendency,[4] the 1605 edition of Sir Edwin Sandys' *A relation of the state of religion,*[5] a 1649 translation of the *Alcoran of Mahomet,*[6] and a version of that ancient free-thinking classic, *The Three Grand Impostors,*[7] about which in 1652 the House of Commons was making inquiries, as well as a great variety of Puritan and Catholic books, sometimes lumped toegther in one grand mess of abhorrence by their harassed opponents Yet in spite of the censorship there seems to have been a good deal of unlicensed printing in England One must always receive with considerable

[2] Arber, *op cit*, II, 24

[3] W H Hart, *Index Expurgatoribus Anglicanus or A Descriptive Catalogue of the Principal Books Printed or Published in England, which have been suppressed, or burnt by the Common Hangman, or Censured, or for which the Authors, Printers, or Publishers have been Prosecuted, Part I* (London, 1872), pp 8-9

[4] *Ibid*, Part II (London, 1873), p 124

[5] *Ibid*, Part I, p 49

[6] *Ibid*, Part III (London, 1874), p 159

[7] *Ibid*, p 171

reserve seventeenth century English accounts of the menace of "popery," for that was a popular bugaboo But when the Commons in 1621 list as one of the principal causes of the alarming spread of "popery" the connivance of publishers and officials at the printing of unlicensed books, they are merely summing up a situation for which we have evidence from other sources Dodging the censorship was a sport not by any means confined to the poor or the obscure among English publishers Michael Sparke, whose name occurs on the titlepage of so many of the religious books of the period, was more than once in trouble for "printing and publishing offensive books without license or warrant,"[8] and on the famous occasion when Prynne lost his ears, Sparke was pilloried and fined[9]

And while we sympathize with these victims of the censor's tyranny, we should not forget that the episcopal censor's office was not without its own peculiar anxieties This is rather amusingly illustrated by an instance already alluded to, a royal proclamation of 1637 "for calling in a Book, entituled, *An Introduction to a Deuout Life,* and that the same be publikely burnt" The proclamation opens with a summary of the case

> Whereas a Book, entituled, *An Introduction to a Deuout Life,* was lately printed by Nicholas Oakes of London, and many of them published and dispersed throughout the Realme, the Copy of which Book being brought to the Chaplaine of the Lord Archbishop of Canterbury, for License and allowance, was by him, vpon diligent perusall, in sundry places expunged and purged of diuers passages therein tending to Popery Neuerthelesse the same Book, after it was amended and allowed to be printed, was corrupted and falsified by the Translator and Stationer, who between them inserted again the same Popish and vnsound passages And the Stationer is now apprehended, and the Translator sought for to be proceeded against according to Iustice

Under the circumstances, one can hardly blame the king for what ensues

> His Maiesty, out of His pious and constant care, to vphold and maintain the Religion professed in the Church of England in its purity, without Error or Corruption, Doth therefore hereby declare His Royall Will and Pleasure to be, and doth straightly Charge and Command all persons, of what degree, quality, or condition soeuer, to whose hands any of the said Books are, or shall come, that without delay they deliuer or send them to the Bishop, or

[8] *Ibid*, Part II, p 72

[9] *Ibid*, p 74.

Chancellor of the Diocesse, whom his Maiestie requireth to cause the same to be publikely burnt, as such of them as haue beene already seized on, haue been by His Maiesties expresse Command And to this His Maiesties Royall Pleasure, he requireth all His louing Subiects to yeeld all due Conformity and Obedience, as they will auoid the censure of high Contempt[10]

According to Laud's account eleven or twelve hundred copies of the book were seized and burned[11]

Then, too, there were unlicensed presses that operated entirely without benefit of clergy For instance, some of the Martin Marprelate tracts were printed "by one Wal[de]grave, who had a travelling press for this purpose, which was once brought down to Fawesly, and from thence by several stages removed to Manchester, where both the press and workmen were seized by the Earl of Derby"[12] That encyclopedic "Detection of Sundry Late practices and impostures of the Priests and Jesuites in England" which John Gee brought to a third edition in 1624 under the stirring title of *The Foot out of the Snare* mentions among other iniquities, "a Printing-house supprest about some three yeeres since in *Lancashire*, where all *Brerely* his works, with many other Popish pamphlets were printed"[13] Another device of the underground press was to print a book with a title page purporting to be from Louvain or Douai In this way a William Carter seems to have printed a number of Catholic works in England[14] The typographical ornaments and the type betray their English origin to the modern expert, but the device seems to have enjoyed success, for Gee, who had a sharp nose for such things, does not mention this particular dodge

But the more common source of Catholic works of devotion, both original and translated, was, of course, to be found on the Continent itself The traffic in prohibited books was by no means limited to Catholic writings John Bastwick's *Letany*, a thoroughly

[10] *By the King, A Proclamation for calling in a Book, entituled, An Introduction to a Deuout Life*

[11] Hart, *op cit*, Part II, p 81

[12] *Ibid*, Part I, p 18

[13] John Gee, *The Foot out of the Snare*, etc (3rd ed, London, 1624), "A Catalogue of Popish Bookes," sig R, v Cf also Arthur J Hawkes "The Birchley Hall Secret Press," and C A Newdigate, "Birchley—Or St Omers," (London, 1927), *Transactions of the London Bibliographical Society*, Second Series, Vol VII

[14] [Henry Pyne?] *List of English Books Printed not later than the Year 1600* (London, 1878), p 8

Puritan work, was printed in Holland in 1637 and sold in England.[15] But there is not much to suggest that this traffic in Puritan books was very considerable, largely because the public for the distinctively Inner Light works that were the most notable contribution of Holland to the Protestant devotion of the time was small. But there were on the Continent a great many publishing centers for English Catholic books. One finds on the title-pages of the large collections of Recusant books in the Bodleian and the British Museum, Paris, Louvain, Rouen, Douai, St. Omer, over and over again. These were the main centers of Recusant printing activity. Of one, the famous Jesuit press at St. Omer, we have a very lively account in another of "the Papist exposures" of the time. The title speaks for itself and suggests the proper reservations of credence. *The Running Register: Recording A True Relation of the State of the English Colledges, Seminaries and Cloysters in all forraine parts. Together with a briefe and compendious discourse of the Liues, Practices, Coozenage, Impostures and Deceits of all our English Monks, Friers, Iesuites, and Seminarie Priests in generall.* It is Lewis Owen's, published in 1626. But whatever allowance must be made for the alarmist cast of the author's reflections, Owen's account of the profits of the Jesuit press at St. Omer does not seem at all unreasonable in view of what we know of its activity, and of the books bearing its impress that have survived.

> Their Presse is worth vnto them more then foure hundred pounds yearely. For they themselues are the Authors, Correctors, Composers, and Pressemen, in so much that it doth cost them nothing but Paper and Inke, and these bookes they doe sell at an vnreasonable rate: for they are not ashamed to sell a booke that containes not a quire of Paper, for fiue or sixe shillings, and to that purpose they haue their Factors, and Brokers in *London*, and all parts of *England*, to disperse and sell these Bookes and Pamphlets, and to transport the money vnto them at Saint Omer.[16]

The profits of this bootleg business in books were a sore subject for the righteous!

Again, it is difficult to gauge the actual extent of the smuggling of books, but there was enough of it to engage the attention of authority and on occasion to lead authority to take drastic action.

[15] Hart, *op. cit.*, p. 78.

[16] Lewis Owen, *The Running Register*, etc. (London, 1626), p. 14.

For instance, on December 6, 1601, the Privy Council sent from Whitehall "A letter to the Maior of Plymouth, the preacher of that towne and the officers of the Custome "

> Whereas wee understande that divers tymes there are brought into the porte of Plymouth and other the Westerne portes many lewde and seditious bookes and other superstitious reliques dangerous and unfit to be dispersed, both in regarde of the State and common peace of the Churche, wherefore reposinge especiall truste in your fidelitie, care, discrecion and dilligence wee have made choise of you and hereby do authorize you or any three of you, whereof the Maior, preacher or customer beinge one, to view all kinde of bookes and reliques or whatsoever you finde tending to idolatrie or superstition, or contrary to her Majesty's lawes and quiett peace of this kingdomme, which you shall staye and safely keepe in your custodie untill further direccion from us, and of your proceedinges herein you shall from tyme to tyme advertise me, the Lord Tresorer, or the Lordes in generall as occasion maie require [17]

What the immediate fruits of that order were we do not know, but there are records of later seizures of forbidden books and other "reliques of popery" at Sandwich in 1620, at Dover in 1623, while two lists of the books actually taken at Newcastle-upon-Tyne in April of 1626 still survive in the Record Office in London The first of these, a list of "Popish Bookes taken in a Dutch Shippe" on the first of April consists of some twenty-five titles "in severall Bundells sowed up in a Canvase bagge" directed to a Mr North. The number of copies varies from one of the *Breviarium Romanum* and one each of several forgotten books of controversy, to twenty-five copies of the *Iesus Psalter* and seventy-four of an *Angelicall Exercise to stirre up to yᵉ Love of the blessed Virgin* There are several other manuals of prayer, some edifying histories, and of the greatest interest for our purpose, the *Meditations upon the Mysteries of our holy Fayth, with the practise of mentall Prayer,* of Luis de la Puente, the *Following of Christe* by Thomas à Kempis, *The Practise of Christian Works* by Francis Borgia, and last, but in contemporary eyes far from least, *A Christian Directory, commonly called yᵉ Resolution* by Robert Parsons [18] The fact that most of these books come in several

[17] *Acts of the Privy Council,* New Series, XXXII, 1601-1604, ed John Roche Dasent (London, 1907), 412-413

[18] *State Papers Domestic Charles I,* XXIV, No 23 III, Newcastle upon Tyne, "Popish Bookes taken in a Dutch Shippe the 1 of Apr 1626"

copies and that all are, so far as can be seen from the titles, either in English or Latin suggests that these books are a consignment to one of the many distributors of illicit books that we shall consider presently

On the contrary, the presence of books in Hebrew, Dutch, Italian, and French, in addition to the Latin and English, the presence of portions of the works of Aquinas, Chrysostom, and Ambrose, and the mention of pictures, beads, official papers, and manuscripts, all suggest that the second lot is the travelling library of some priest just sent over on the English mission Several works on confession, a Book of Hours, various orders and offices, and above all a *Missale Parvum pro Sacerdotibus itinerantibus in Anglia,* sound distinctly professional, while "An olde Greeke Grammar" suggests a resolution to continue the studies begun or neglected in seminary days For divinity and controversy, it is a very well selected travelling library, with considerable apparatus for the study of the Bible and due regard to the controversies of the time in works by Jansenius and Bellarmine, as well as older authorities But for our purpose it is most interesting for the books of devotion: *The Arte of Dying Well,* by Bellarmine, *The Contempt of the World* by Diego de Stella, *An Epistle of Comforte,* by R. S.,[19] *St Peters complainte and Mary Magdalens Tears,* "Bookes titled La Devotion de L Esolavaye," something not named of Dionysius the Areopagite, and likewise of Bonaventura, "John Tauler's *De Vita et Passione Salvatoris,*" and *Pious Meditations upon the Beads*[20] The modern lover of Tauler and Dionysius and Bonaventura cannot but wish that a man with such good taste in books recovered them to beguile many a fugitive hour hidden under the eves of Recusant roofs, with their heaven-roaming freedom But he was very lucky if he lost only his books and escaped to grace at last some martyr's tale for the appreciative younger brethren to glory in of home-sick nights at Douai or St Omer

Obviously, April of 1626 was a red-letter month for the customs of Newcastle-upon-Tyne and the forces of sound Protestant-

[19] In all probability Robert Southwell, whose *Epistle of Comfort* was printed in 1593. The next title may also be his

[20] *State Papers Domestic Charles I,* XXVI, No 16 VI, "Newcastle upon Tyne / A Catalogue of the Popish Bookes and Reliques of Popery seized on by the Searchers Men in searching of a Shipp in this Porte the last day of Aprile 1626"

ism and order More often than not the canvass sack slipped by, as Lewis Owen complained, "either secretly with some forraigne Merchants goods, or else with some *Ambassadours* goods"[21] And then authority, when it was roused to action by some periodic popery scare, was hard put to it to run down the smuggler's trove

The number of people involved must have been considerable, for when in August of 1622 the King wished to show some grace to the English Catholics, it was decided that the offence of "disposing of Popish books" was one of those to be treated more gently [22] Of course missionary priests like our friend who read Tauler were prime offenders, and there are plenty of tales of their seizure with the incriminating evidence John Gee has a picturesque description of one of the more successful

> A certaine notorious Iesuite lodging in a Sanctuary not farre from the *Sauoy*, is himselfe a great Merchant for the commodity of these Popish Pamphlets, and, as I haue heard some of his brethren say, he hath thriuen well thereby, especially whiles he fished in vntroubled waters My selfe haue seene greater store of books in quires at his chamber, then I euer beheld in any Stationer's Ware-house about *Pauls*, he hauing two or three large roomes fitted out with heapes in this kinde to the very top [23]

There was also about 1620 a rich vintner who was reported to keep "Popish books under a church in London"[24] The same informant mentions several stationers who, not unlike booksellers since, as soon as they heard of a banned book hired young fellows to make copies of it, copies which, alas for the enduring weaknesses of human nature, were "eagerly bought up."[25] Then there was inevitably a good deal of passing of books from hand to hand

It is impossible to discover just how much of this sort of thing there was, but it is possible to draw some inferences One Thomas Allfield, a priest, who was tortured and executed in 1585 for distributing copies of Cardinal Allen's *Modest Answer to the English Persecutors,* admitted that he had brought five or six hundred copies of this work into England and disposed of them all [26] John

[21] Owen, *op cit*, p 111

[22] *Calendar of State Papers, Domestic Series, James I 1619-1623*, ed Mary Anne Everett Green (London, 1858), p 436

[23] Gee, *op cit*, "A Catalogue," etc sig R_3^v

[24] *Calendar of State Papers, Domestic Series, James I 1619-1623*, p 208

[25] *Ibid*

[26] Hart, *op cit*, p 15

Gee lists one hundred and fifty-odd English books in his "A Catalogue or Note of such English bookes (to the knowledge of which I could come) as haue been printed, reprinted, or dispersed by the Priests and their Agents in this Kingdome, within these two yeeres last past, or thereabouts"[27] Some of these are merely Catholic versions of the Scriptures, missals, standard works of divinity, saints' lives, and such moderately innocuous matter. Others, however, are works of controversy with the aggressively un-diplomatic titles characteristic of the seventeenth century. Still others are of definitely devotional interest, Sir Tobie Mathew's translation of Saint Augustine's *Confessions, An Introduction to a Deuout Life* by the Jesuit York, Pointer's *Meditations,* Granada's *Memoriall* and *Meditations,* Parsons' *Resolutions,* Molina's *Of Mentall Prayer,* and Villacastine's [Ignatius of Loyola's] *Exercises* being perhaps the outstanding examples And this list, we have abundant evidence to believe, is incomplete.

Another interesting thing about John Gee's account is that he gives the current prices for a number of these books to substantiate his claim that they are being sold for three or four times the price they would command if they were sold on the same scale as other books of the time Perhaps the most striking example he cites is that of the octavo volume of Mathew's translation of the *Confessions* of Saint Augustine, which he says might bring two and six in a normal market, and actually sells for sixteen shillings[28] John Gee charged profiteering, but however willing one is to accept that explanation of the motives of those who charged these prices, the fact is that they were apparently paid It may be simply that they were hard to come at and passionately desired by devout Recusants It may be that the cachet of the illicit enhanced their value, as later in the century Pepys reports that the common belief that the bishops would not permit the reprinting of Hobbes' *Leviathan* quadrupled its price in the book market The young man of Donne's satire who went to Mass for a thrill and was seized in the raid that happened to be made that day was probably by no means unique even in the seventeenth century He makes a poor showing beside those other young men who for

[27] Gee, *op cit*, sig Q_3ff

[28] *Ibid*, sig Q_3'

Pope or Presbytery went so gallantly to pillory and to gallows, but in some of the bewildering intensities and fanaticisms of the time he is an amusing spot of recognizable and familiar youthful irresponsibility

But he would not keep even a bootleg book trade alive. One of the most interesting aspects of the warfare between the two camps is the way in which the two parties while writing for their own side continually addressed each other There is nothing surprising in this so far as the Protestant writer is concerned All England was open to him. And while confirmed Recusants doubtless eschewed heretical literature, those who made any pretence of keeping in touch with the world at all could hardly avoid it, and those who were in any degree open to conviction would naturally welcome it But on the other side the case was very different In spite of the occasional popular panic that saw a Jesuit in every cupboard, the sound Church of England man could escape Catholic literature if he chose Yet hardly a Catholic book comes out in English without some appeal to, some notice, of the other side It is clear that in general the translators of Catholic books of devotion for Catholic readers expected Protestants to take them up It is probable that Blackwell's prohibition in 1599 of the publication of books offensive to the state or injurious to the unity of the church had a chastening effect on Catholic controversial manners and brought home to them the diplomatic necessities of their position A minority trying to win converts to its position without violence faces certain inevitable limitations on the higher reaches of vituperation Then too, although divided and conflicting loyalties in sensitive spirits wreak much havoc amid the freer movements of the mind, they do assuage bitterness and intolerance An honest man who has had to disapprove of the behavior of some of his own party will be less savage in his strictures on his enemies, particularly when he still hopes to win those enemies to be of his own way of thinking But whatever the mainsprings of such forbearance, Ch M 's preface to *A Myrrhine Posie of the Bitter Dolours of Christ His Passion, and of the Seauen Words He spake on the Crosse,* published at Douai in 1639, is typical of a whole point of view and of a more or less concerted endeavor. "Because I desire that not onelie Catholikes but also

Protestants, and all they who goe by the name of Christians should reade this Pamphlet, and take some benefit by it, I abstaine from all Controuersies in Religion, that none may be deterred from reading it "[29] And there can be no question that such efforts to commend one's point of view to readers of the opposite party had their reward in the attention at least of their adversaries.

But how did such books come into the hands of respectable Anglicans? A letter in the Public Records Office in London answers this question and perhaps another one of even deeper interest to the student of the poetry of the time William Crashaw, preacher to the lawyers at the Temple, was one of the most distinguished leaders of his time in the controversy with Rome He was of distinctly Puritan leanings in temperament and tastes and, especially, in awareness of the dangers of Rome His vituperations for thoroughness and bitterness compete with the best of the time, which means eminence in their very dubious field He was also the father of Richard Crashaw, who became a Catholic convert and brought to his father's old adversary its finest English religious poetry for the time The following letter of his shows how professionals in the Roman controversy obtained their material, it also suggests how one famous convert may conceivably have started his Romeward journey in his Puritan father's library. It is dated "the Temple Feb 26, 1610" and inscribed "To the right Honorable The Earle of Salisburye Lorde highe Treasurer of Englande" The letter itself is as follows.

My humble dutye remembred

I humbly beseech your lordship at your owne best laisure to peruse the inclosed, and let me attende your lordship touchinge the particulars thereof when your lordship shal appointe

And whereas I am informed some popishe bookes newely taken are in your lordships disposition, I beseche your lordship continue your wonted favoure and let me have of eche kinde one, for my owne use[ ] So greivinge to take even thus much time from your lordship I humbly take leave and will ever rest (as your lordship by many bonds have tied me to be)

Your lordships faithfull and devoted Servant in Christ

W Crashawe [31]

[29] Ch M, *A Myrrhine Posie of the Bitter Dolours of Christ His Passion*, etc (Doway, 1639), p 12

[31] *State Papers Domestic James I*, LXI, No 111, Feb 26, 1611 The contractions of the original have been expanded throughout this copy

It would be interesting to know if such a disposition of the confiscated libraries of Recusants was confined to professional participants in the Roman controversy But in any case this was one very important source of supply for the respectable

Another was travel The young Nicholas Ferrar must have been a very remarkable young traveller for that, or any, time, but it is reported that he brought home from his travels "many scarce books in various languages, chiefly treating of a spiritual life and of religious retirement"[32] When it is remembered that Ferrar knew Dutch and German, Italian, French, and Spanish, it becomes a matter of deep regret that he left no catalogue of the trove of his youthful travels A slight variant of the traveller's collection may be found in a gift which in 1602 the Earl of Essex made to Bodley's library at Oxford It consisted of the books which he had taken from the library of the Grand Inquisitor of Portugal, Mascarenhas, at the sacking of Faro in 1596[33]

Apparently, contraband books of piety made a very acceptable gift for good Protestants travelling abroad to send to equally good Protestant friends at home We have an amusing example in a letter which Isaac Basire, a well-known English divine of the reign of Charles I, who was at one time chaplain to the Bishop of Durham, and a friend of the Ferrars, wrote to the lady to whom he was engaged He is sending her a present of books—"These two I send you myselfe are, 1 An Introduction to a Devout Life, etc 2 The marrow of the Oracles of God two books which next to God's owne, my soul hath been much taken with The first was made by a French bishop, yet is the booke free from Popery, (for I have read it aforehand for your soule's saecke) only where you see a crosse at the margent, there it may be mistaken by some, else, all is safe"[34]

In this letter of Basire's to his fiancée we have the key to what was after all the most common form in which Recusant literature, both original and translation, circulated in England As we have seen, direct translations by good Protestants from Catholic works

[32] *Cambridge in the Seventeenth Century*, Part I, *Nicholas Ferrar*, ed. J E B Mayor (Cambridge, 1855), "Dr Jebb's Life of Nicholas Ferrar," p 201

[33] *Letters of Sir Thomas Bodley to Thomas James*, p 33, editor's footnote to Letter 24

[34] *The Correspondence of Isaac Basire, D D Archdeacon of Northumberland and Prebendary of Durham, in the Reigns of Charles I and Charles II with a Memoir of his Life*, ed W N Darnell (London, 1831), p 21

in foreign languages were not only tolerated but highly approved and encouraged in England So the already existent Recusant translation of a continental work not unnaturally came to be viewed as a short-cut to this desirable end But in spite of the Protestant democratization of the problematic side of religion, responsible Protestant opinion was not blind to the pitfalls of the printed word for people who had no equipment to decide mooted questions of dogma and apologetics for themselves. The result was the Protestant editorship of the Catholic book with the warnings, the expurgations, the explanations, the adaptations, on occasion even changes, deemed essential to the safeguarding of the piety of the unlearned, especially the women

The method with its triumphs and its complications is to be seen in its classic form in the entertaining story of a book which enjoyed no little eminence in its own day. It will be remembered that Robert Greene, the Elizabethan dramatist and Bohemian, in his famous *Repentance,* written from his deathbed, gave the credit for his conversion to what he called "the booke of *Resolution*"[35] This was one of the most sensational conversions of that age of sensational conversions But far more consequential than the deathbed repentance of the worn-out Greene was the conversion by the reading of the same book, of a boy of fifteen who was to play a notable part in the religious developments of the century The boy was Richard Baxter, the great Presbyterian leader, and this is the account he gives of his conversion, as preserved in the *Reliquiae Baxterianae*·

> And being under some more Conviction for my Sin, a poor Day-Labourer in the Town (he that I before-mentioned that was wont to read in the Church for the old Parson) had an old torn Book which he lent my Father, which was called *Bunny's Resolution,* (being written by *Parson's* the Jesuit, and corrected by *Edm Bunny*) . And in the reading of this Book (when I was about Fifteen years of Age) it pleased God to awaken my Soul, and shew me the folly of Sinning, and the misery of the Wicked, and the unexpressible weight of things Eternal, and the necessity of resolving on a Holy Life, more than I was ever acquainted with before[36]

It is true that both the dying rake and the awakening religious genius were at crises in their lives when a very slight occasion

[35] Robert Greene, "The Repentance of Robert Greene," *Life and Works of Robert Greene, M A*, ed Alexander Grosart (London, 1881-86), XII, 165 ff

[36] *Reliquiae Baxterianae,* p 3

would serve, but the two stories afford vivid evidence of the influence which the book exercised in its time

Even when he wrote the above account, Baxter had in all probability not read enough Recusant literature to realize that a work was almost never original with the English name that appeared on the title-page, and that for the most part the translators made no effort to conceal the borrowing As a matter of fact, this particular book is a translation of a famous Italian devotional book, *The Exercise of a Christian Life,* to give it the title under which it first appeared in English, the work of the Jesuit Gasper Loarte It is the classical type for the period, a book of selections arranged so as to provide the appropriate meditations and prayers for every day in the week and for all pious occasions As Parsons carefully points out in his first edition of 1582, it had already been translated into English (an "improved" version by James Sancer appeared at Paris in 1579), and had enjoyed considerable popularity when he came upon it and in typical seventeenth century fashion found it incomplete He thereupon proceeded to lay out a plan which eventually, with material of his own, expanded his original to between three and four times its first size Since the Italian author was a Catholic doctor of unimpeachable orthodoxy and, still better, a member of his own order, one may be sure that the improvements did not affect matters of doctrine or fundamental point of view But they did serve to realize Parsons' avowed purpose of giving his countrymen "some one sufficient direction for matters of life and spirit, among so manye bookes of controuersies as haue ben writen, and are in writinge dailye"[37] The first book of this expanded version was published, probably at Rouen, in 1582

Apparently, this version enjoyed considerable popularity in Protestant circles in England At any rate Edmund Bunny saw nobler possibilities in it But he tells the story very well for himself in his address to the Archbishop of Canterbury, prefixed to the first edition of his version in 1584

May it please your Grace to understand that wheras at the first by a fri[e]nd of mine, and after by mine own experience, I perceived, that the booke insuing was willingly read by divers, for the persuasion that it hath to

[37] Robert Parsons, *The First Booke of the Christian Exercise, apperteyning to resolution,* etc ([Rouen?], 1582), p 2

godlines of life, which notwithstanding in manie points was corruptly set doen I thought good in the end, to get the same published againe in some better manner than now it is come foorth among them, that so the good, that the reading therof might otherwise do, might carrie no hurt or danger withal, so far as by me might be praevented For this cause I have taken the pains, both to purge it of certain points that carried either some manifest error, or else some other inconvenience with them and to join another short Treatise withal, to exhort those that are not yet persuaded, to join with us likewise in the truth of Religion For so to accept of our adversaries labors so much as is good, may I trust bring to passe with some few of them, that themselves wil better perceive, that wherin they shal do wel, they may looke to be as readily incouraged by us, as, when they do il, to be admonished, or reprehended either, as the case doth require I was also very glad, both that some of them had taken pains in that kind of labor and that others of their profession were sometimes occupied in reading of such [38]

In the preface to the reader, Bunny then goes on to explain just what he did Again, he begins with a little pat on the head for the author.

As it is set foorth by the Author himselfe, if we consider the substance of it, surely it was wel woorth the labor (a few points only excepted) and much of it, of good persuasion to godlines of life But if we consider the form, or maner of it, therin maiest thou finde, that it was needful for me, before hand to admonish thee of these few things First, that throughout the whole booke the Author hath used, in those scriptures that he alledgeth, the vulgar translation that was before in common use with them, and some special words praecisely, such as before they have taken upon them to observe, and therein stil to discent from us The vulgar translation is known wel inough so that I need to say nothing of it. Those special words that praecisely he useth, are, Our Lord, when it is more agreeable to the text to say, The Lord iustice, for righteousnes poenance, for repentance merit, for good works, or the service of God and a few others As for those special words of theirs I have used my libertie therin sometimes letting them stand as they are, and sometimes altering them, when they were abused, or otherwise the case did so require Those other points of their proper opinions, wherin we dissent from them, and they (no dowt) from the truth it selfe, I have clean left out, and some of those venturous points besides, togither with certain of those places likewise, which he hath alledged out of others, that did not so much appertain to the matter that he had in hand, or not so effectually touched the same, as himselfe otherwise hath done And this have I done so much the rather, for that most of those things seem rather to be added by some that had the perusing of the booke, before it might be allowed among them to come to the print, than by the proper Author therof they do so

[38] *A Booke of Christian exercise, appertaining to Resolution, that is, shewing how that we should resolve our selves to become Christians indeed by R P Perused, and accompanied now with a Treatise tending to Pacification by Edm Bunny* (London, 1584), sigs $*_2$-$*_2$v

little oft times agree with the argument that there he hath in hand, nor with the maner of handling of it [39]

In other words, we have here an excellent example of seventeenth century editing, based on the most approved methods of the time for textual criticism and emendation.

The fruits of all this labor, Bunny published in 1584 The very next year, with a preface dated from Saint Omer in Artois, August 30, 1585, Parsons published *A Christian Directorie Guiding Men to their Saluation Deuided into three Bookes The first whereof appertaining to Resolution, is only conteined in this volume, deuided into two partes, and set forth now againe with many corrections, and additions by th' Author him self, with reprofe of the corrupt and falsified edition of the booke lately published by M Edm Bunny,* etc It need hardly be said that Robert Parsons did not appreciate all the pains that Mr Bunny had taken with his book But he began like the weary man of peace he must often have coveted to be in the course of his troubled life with an account of his first edition, in which he reminded his reader of what he had already said in the preface to that edition

> Our forfathers were most happie in respect of vs, who receauing with humilitie one vniforme faith without contention or contradiction, from their mother the holie Catholique Church, did attend onlie to build vpon that foundation good workes and vertuous life, as holie scripture commandeth vs to doe, wheras we, spending now al our time in iangling about this first foundation of faith, have no leasure to build either gould or siluer theron, as th' Apostle exhorteth vs, but doe weary out our selues and our owne contentious spirits, without commoditie, dying with much labour and litle profit, with great disquiet and smale reward For which cause I exhorted the discret reader of whatsoeuer religion and faith he were, to moderate this heate and passion of contention, and to enter into the careful studie and exercise of good deedes, which are alwayes better among true Christians, then wordes, assuring him that this is the right way to obteine at Gods hands, the light of true beleefe if he were amisse [40]

Alas, for Parsons' pacific resolutions! In less than three pages he is demanding of Mr Bunny "in sincerite, where or when, any of his religion did either make or set forthe (of them selues) any one treatise of this kinde or subiect?" And he points his question

[39] *Ibid*, sigs $*_5$-$*_7$
[40] Parsons, *A Christian Directorie*, fol 6v

with the modest claim for his own side: "Of ours I can name infinite both of times past and present."

Then Parsons takes up in detail, with abundant illustration, what he conceives to be the corruptions which Bunny has introduced into his text The heart of the quarrel is in the first charge, of which there can be no real denial, though we shall find Bunny will be at no loss for justification "First in al places wher conueniently he maye, he maketh me speake after the phrase of Protestantes, as for example, page 204 of his booke, wher I talke of Catholique preestes that heare confessions, he maketh me saie, *men that be skilful to give Counsail,* etc"[41] His second charge is that where Bunny cannot or dare not change the actual wording, he puts in

some parenthesis, as though the same were of th' authour him self So page 39 I say, that our Sauiour being demanded by a certaine prince, how he might be saued, would geue him no other hope albeit he were a prince, but, *if thou wilt enter into life, kepe the commandementes* Wher M Buny helpeth the matter out with this parenthesis, saying, *He would geue him no other hope (so long as he sought saluation by his workes) but keepe the commandementes, etc* As though this prince had sought his saluation erroniously, & that Christ had answered him in his error, & so deceaued him [42]

It would take more space than the matter is worth to examine all Parsons' complaints There would be some difference of opinion as to whether the marginal annotations which Bunny inserted into the work were, as Parsons claims, some "ridiculous and absurd, and other wicked and tending to impietie,"[43] but there is no question that he made them In so doing Bunny was but following a perfectly well-established method of safeguarding an ambiguous text, a method which we have already seen applied to early translations of the *Imitation* Parsons ends this part of the book with a vigorous and again carefully documented protest against various manglings and omissions of Bunny's Taken all in all, it is a very spirited and complete arraignment not only of Bunny's editorial methods but, what Parsons does not point out, of the "correcting methods" of a good many seventeenth century English editors

[41] *Ibid*, fols 10v 11
[42] *Ibid*, fol 11v
[43] *Ibid*, fol 12

It apparently took Bunny some four years to get round to disposing of Parsons' complaints, but when he did so in 1589, it was with quite as much vivacity and warmth as if the affair had just occurred. There is no mistaking what Bunny (or his publisher) judged important from the title which was given to his new edition in days when titles were still supposed to give some clue to their contents: *A Briefe Answer, vnto those idle and friuolous quarrels of R. P. against the late edition of the Resolution. By Edmund Bunny. Wherunto are praefixed the booke of Resolution, and the treatise of Pacification, perused and noted in the margent, on all such places as are misliked of R. P. shewing in what Section of this Answer following, those places are handled.* And the book lives up to the promise of its title. First, Bunny disposes of Parsons' complaint that he is made to speak like a minister, with commendable brevity, if very little satisfaction to Parsons. "And in the processe of your booke we may indeed very well perceiue, that you care not howe you speake, so that you speake not *like a good Minister of England*: & thervpon belike you come in with your *Hebdomades, Depositum, Pressures, Confide,* and such like choosing rather, therby to seem to walke in the clowds than to go on the ground as they doe."[44]

Then he takes up Parsons' complaints in detail. One of his answers will be quite enough to indicate the main lines of his defence, if anything so energetically aggressive can be termed a defence. It is his response to Parsons's first objection,

> that wheras *you talked* (as you say) of *Catholike priests that heare confessions,* I made you to say, *men that be skilful to giue counsell.* And true indeed, that whereas you had so framed your speech, as best might serue you to restraine the wise & comfortable handling, & right managing of a christian soule, only to those whom you vntruly cal *catholike priests,* & withall to establish that lewd deuise of your auricular confession, & to make it a sacrament too: I on the other side (leauing those your contentious brablings) quietly exprest the matter you had in hand in such other tearms, as might sufficiently expresse the thing it selfe, & not leane to any of those corruptions neither. But as I forbare to name you, so may you see, that I tooke not the place to ourselues. Though I left out that vnruly and disorderly companie of yours whome you would so faine commend vnto vs vnder the name of *Catholike Priests* (then the which they are nothing lesse.) yet did I not so frame it, as that it might seeme to import none but our selues, by putting in

[44] Bunny, *A Briefe Answer,* p. 53.

the *Ministers of the Gospell* into their roomes, but left the description as indifferent to you (if you could so imploy your selues) as I did vnto vs [45]

So Bunny made it clear that all he had done was to bring Parsons' misguided work closer to the truth which Parsons was too blind to see If Parsons did not like it, what more was needed to show that he did not know the truth when he saw it? So far as we can tell, Parsons let it rest at that For the edition of *A Christian Directory* of 1650, "reviewed, corrected, and augmented, by the Author himself, a little before his death" adds to preceding criticisms of Bunny's procedure only a couple of paragraphs of very general reprobation [46]

But the work itself was firmly established in the favor of what the 1590 London edition of the second part styled "all indifferent iudgements."[47] After all, as the publisher of this same edition pointed out, it was "written by a Iesuit beyonde the Seas, yet an English man"[48]

[45] *Ibid*, p 55

[46] Robert Parsons, *A Christian Directory*, etc ([n p] 1650)

[47] Robert Parsons, *The Seconde parte of the Booke of Christian exercise*, etc (London, 1590), sig ¶3

[48] *Ibid*

CHAPTER VII

The English Books of Devotion—Types

Interesting as these various translations and adaptations from foreign books of devotion are in themselves, and important as they often are for the influence they exerted on English devotional books, they yet must always yield place in significance for the student of English literature to those works which composed in the first place on English soil express at first hand the thought and feeling of Englishmen of that time on the enduring problems of man's religious life It is then with a peculiar sense of having come to the heart of the matter that we turn to those hundreds of books that were composed and published in England in the years from 1600 to 1640 This does not mean that we shall not often catch echoes of the works we have just been considering, it does not mean that we shall not often find ourselves in an alien passage which the borrower has made too much his own to trouble about acknowledging, but it does mean that in the making of these books the initial impulse and the spirit that breathes through the whole composition is English

For this reason it seems best to begin our study of them with some effort to understand the group as a whole It is, as we have seen, too large for a complete survey, involving as it does some hundreds of books But we can grasp its main lines if we study in typical examples both the purpose which animated the writers of these books and the different ways in which they tried to realize that purpose For the first, we shall discover the general purpose of this group most readily if we look at some of the definitions of the nature and function of prayer with which many of these books open For the second, we shall roughly group the books themselves into the obvious classes into which they fall and try to define those classes in terms of outstanding examples

In an earlier chapter we saw the striking difference between the conceptions of what constitutes a devotional book that underlay the dispute between Edmund Bunny and Robert Parsons on the question of whether Anglicans could show a devotional literature of their own And we have seen how the very limited conception of Bunny was for his group in general deepened and widened not only by the growth of English devotional life but to some extent at least by the study and the appropriation of continental literature This does not mean that there was any sudden or overwhelming change in the point of view of the Bunny's of the time As late as 1623 in his *Treatise Catechisticall, God and Man* John Boughton, Preacher of the Word, presents essentially the same point of view in what he says of private prayer, "which," so he defines it, "is performed either by ourselues alone, or together with others, in any priuate or secret place", and still more in the ensuing portion of his catechism which deals with the importance of prayer

"I[acob] Are Christians bound to vse both these kindes of prayers, publike and priuate?

B[eniamin] They are neither the one nor the other may bee neglected of any that desire to liue like Christians, and men fearing God, especially, the publike, which is most to bee set by and esteemed of euery man "[1] That we may take as a fair statement of the point of view which men like Donne were trying to get away from

Indeed, if we examine the rich crop of English devotional books that signalized their triumph and consolidated their victory, we shall find that many of those who wrote most enthusiastically for the life of prayer cherished notions of its nature and its function as elementary as that implied above This was inevitable, for a man's conception of prayer depends not merely upon the religious party to which he belongs but still more upon his individual temperament and spiritual gift There is nothing surprising therefore in the fact that in this literature we shall find an amazing variety of notions of what prayer is, ranging from the low but very human levels of the frankly utilitarian to the heights of the mystical, from the conception of prayer as the surest way of ob-

[1] J[ohn] B[oughton], *God and Man Or, A Treatise Catechisticall, wherein the sauing knowledge of God and Man is plainely, and briefely declared,* etc (London, 1623), p 107

taining private material favor to the appreciation of prayer as the ladder by which man may climb to immediate and ineffable communion with God. It is therefore necessary to examine a few typical examples of these definitions to understand just how these men conceived of the inner life of the spirit, which they were trying to stimulate and to nourish.

We are in the middle sands of that desert of seventeenth century orderliness which only escapes formalism by virtue of its unfailing earnestness and sincerity, in a definition like the following. "Invocation or prayer is a religious speech of the faithfull, directed unto God in the name of Christ, framed according to the will of God by the help of the holy Ghost, concerning good things apperteining to his glory and our good."[2] Practically the same thing is said at the beginning of *The Groans of the Spirit,* but with how much more glow and intimacy of accent. "There is no better means to awake us then to *hear God speaking to us,* and to set ourselves *a-talking to God . . . Prayer is a spiritual Ability infused into the heart, whereby the soul expresseth itself familiarly and immediately to God, in the Name of Jesus Christ, with confidence in the promises."* Of course, the range of this passage is somewhat restricted by the limitations of the author's theological point of view, and later on it is still further hemmed in by the equally inevitable restriction of that infused ability, in the following description. "which God, out of the free motive of his love, poureth upon all and every one of his chosen, when he worketh that glorious change in them by the power of the Gospel."[4] Yet within those limits it has that homely vitality which Puritan homiletics so often exhibit.

But there is something far richer in the exhortations to prayer and the more detailed directions on how to pray that so often preface the collection of prayers. There is more glow and even zest in the definition of the "general exhortation to prayer" which Henry Isaacson writing under the inspiration of Lancelot An-

[2] George Downame, *A Godly and Learned Treatise of Prayer,* etc. (London, 1640), p. 2.

[3] [G. F.,] *The Groans of the Spirit, or the Trial of the Truth of Prayer* (3rd ed., printed with the second part of Spark's *The Crums of Comfort*, London, 1652), sigs. E_1^v-E_2^v.

[4] *Ibid.*, sig. O_9.

drewes, if not using his words, in 1630 prefaced to the *Institutiones Piae*.

> Prayer, as a Father well saith, is a familiar conference with God By it, we talk with him, as it were, face to face By other of his graces, as in the Word and Sacraments, he vouchsafeth to speak to us, by this we have access and speake to him, for what we stand in need of And what greater dignity, what greater privilege can be afforded to poor sinful creatures, dust and ashes as we are, than familiarly to talk with so great and powerful a God, and to have daily so free and easy admittance to his presence, to manifest our necessities to him, and to crave his supply and succour?[5]

Not even the orderly lists of "wonderful effects which have been wrought, and the benefits which have been obtained, and the punishments which have been averted in former times, when recourse was had to God by prayer," can quite destroy the glow of the author's sense of that high privilege of intercourse[6] The same awe at that possibility of familiar intercourse, perhaps a little keener in an age when men were so conscious of the dignities of rank, is the keynote to another praise of prayer, in which it soon yields to something even more joyous and tender "There are two principall vses of prayer," begins Thomas Tymme practically. "The one, which concerneth dignity and perfection: as when it pleaseth God to admit men, which are but dust and ashes to conuerse and enter into familiarity with him

"The other is a necessity of deuotion, which bringeth a certaine sweetnesse and delight of the heart, proceeding from the vehemencie of our loue towards God: without which deuotion, man becommeth cold, barren, negligent, and as it were a stranger from God."[7] In that praise of the delight of prayer, for a moment the seventeenth century slips out of its "Great Task-master's Eye" and basks in the open sunshine of God's love, savoring love with love.

Like prayer meditation is one of the gentler arts of the religious life and one of the more purely inward Like prayer it is not likely to flourish in a clash of conflicting points of view. Like prayer its processes are not discursive, and its findings are of scant

[5] *Institutiones Piae or, Meditations and Devotions originally collected and published by H I and afterwards ascribed to the Right Rev Lancelot Andrews*, etc, ed W H Hale (London, 1839), p 58

[6] *Ibid*, pp 60-62

[7] Thomas Tymme, *The Chariot of Deuotion* (London, 1618), p 7

avail for argumentation It grows rather out of accepted premises, its peculiar service to the life of the mind and spirit lies not in any aptitude for the discovery or establishment of truth but rather in the fullness of its realization of truth It has little in it of the Church Militant and much of the Church Triumphant When the strifes of this world of uncertainties are over, and their swords are laid away, meditation will still keep her gentle way over the heavenly fields

There is then a peculiar interest in the greater frequency with which this word appears in the devotional literature of the time It appears in the titles of the books themselves, not always with very much precision of meaning Sometimes it connotes very little more than "thoughts about" The imaginative and affectional elements that play so large a part in the *Spiritual Exercises* of Saint Ignatius of Loyola, for instance, are seldom suggested here, for the result sought is far less specialized. In spite of this generality of conception and of intention there are some passages in these treatises that show a very real appreciation of the value of meditation

Perhaps the most characteristic of these passages, characteristic, that is, in scope and temper, is Paul Baynes' definition of the second of his "priuate helpes" to a godly life

> The second priuate helpe is *Meditation* and that is when we doe of purpose separate our selues from all other things, and consider as we are able, and think of some points of instruction necessary to leade vs forward to the kingdome of Heauen, and the better strengthening vs against the Diuell, and this present euill World, and to the well ordering of our liues This heauenly communion with God and our selues, is that which the Fathers called their *Soliloquies* which must be distinguished from the ordinary thinking of good things, and pondering of words and actions, which yet in the Scripture is called meditation, *Iosh* I, 8 *Psal* 119 97 but this is more solemne, when a man of set purpose doth separate himselfe in these holy and Heauenly thoughts [8]

That we may take as a fairly central statement of the theory of the matter from the typically Christian point of view

Of a loftier pitch and a more mystical temper is the opening of Thomas Taylor's *Meditations, From the Creatures* "Considering with my selfe of the benefit of Meditation, together with the

[8] Paul Bayne[s], *Briefe Directions vnto a Godly Life*, etc (London, 1618), p 231

difficultie of it, which hath almost worne it out of vse amongst Christians, I thought fit to afford a little helpe, to leade vp carefull Christians into this mount of Meditation in which mount God will be seene"[9] But such a mystical soaring as this is seldom found in the religious literature of the period.

Both of these two last passages are securely and essentially within the Christian tradition and, moreover, solidly representative of the general point of view of their time But in *The Happie Mind, or a Compendious Direction, to obtaine the same* we are brought suddenly face to face with very different elements The author, "R. C, Gent.," is quite orthodox enough in his aspirations, though the motive is in no way specifically Christian "And let us endeavour by all meanes to stirre up our minds to the Contemplation of high and notable things, To have variety of noble and excellent thoughts within us"[10] But when he proceeds to illustrate his method, then we find ourselves in the midst of elements in no way characteristic of the general run of these books One is rather reminded of the hermetic influences to be discerned in the writings of some of the philosophic amateurs of the period In his choice of reason as the instrument of his meditation, he is, of course, well within the usual range of this literature But when he comes to illustrate how that reason may operate, then we find ourselves indeed far from the usual purlieus of the period

> Let us therefore even by the light of Reason looke upwards and take a view of heaven, and of God himself, we need mount up but eleven steps (according to Astrologers) from the Earth thither
>
> The first stayre is the Sphere of the *Moone,* The second of *Mercury,* the third of *Venus* (names which they assigne unto the heavens) The fourth that of the *Sunne,* The next of *Mars, Iupiter, Saturne,* Then of the *fixed Starres,* The ninth *Primum Mobile,* The tenth the *Christalline heaven,* and the highest and infinitly most excellent is the *Imperiall,* which is Gods habitation This is the place of our Eternity, of our heavenly Kingdome[11]

Such a passage presents a curious phenomenon for this field, at once more mystical and at the same time less strictly Christian than almost anything else we study in it

[9] Thomas Taylor, *Meditations, From the Creatures,* printed with *A Man in Christ* (London, 1628), pp 1-2

[10] R. C, *The Happie Mind, or a Compendious Direction, to obtaine the same* (London, 1640), p 54

[11] *Ibid*, pp 179-180

When we turn to the type and make-up of these books, we discover quite as wide a range of variety as in the conceptions of the function of prayer and meditation that we have just examined In some ways there is even more For each of these books has its own personal accent, felt not only in the tone but in the very arrangement and method of the book Yet, taken as a group, they do fall into certain fairly well-defined types, with a few definite sports of considerable individual interest It will be obvious from the fact that not only subject matter but general objective must be considered in the definition of these types that only a fairly rough classification will serve to bring any order into the field A precise classification, while more flattering to the logical tastes of author and reader, would only defeat its own end by the multiplication of beguiling discriminations. The following will be less exhaustive and more suggestive

The most strikingly obvious group is, of course, that of the many collections of prayers These by no means all pretend to be original Some make capital of the fact that they are not. Especially is this true of the pious sentences offered for reflection that often accompany the prayers While not properly within our field, composed as they are in Latin, the *Precationes Privatae* of Queen Elizabeth yet afford a pertinent example of the eclecticism of some of these books The author (the prayers are put in the first person and adapted to royal circumstances) has taken pains in the attached *Sententiae* to specify many of the sources of these reflections, pains which, it may be added, writers less vain of their scholarship or less ingenuous about their borrowings do not trouble to take In this case, whatever the motive, one is grateful for the result As might be expected, the private devotions of the great queen are liberally enriched with quotations and echoes from the Scriptures, especially from the Psalms, and from the ancient liturgy And, what is still more remarkable, these thoroughly Christian prayers are accompanied by appropriate sentences of meditation and reflection drawn not only from the Church Fathers but still more surprisingly from pagan authors, from Euripides, Plato, Socrates, Plutarch, Cicero, as well as from that great Christian moralist by anticipation, Seneca This last feature is, except for fugitive allusions in later books, more characteristic

of the sixteenth century than of the seventeenth. Nor is there anything surprising in this fact, for such an intermingling of paganism and Christianity is far more typical of the humanistic ranging of Renaissance Italy than of the religious concentration of seventeenth century England.

This dependence on ancient sources becomes in some ways less explicit as the sixteenth century passes into the seventeenth. One reason is, probably, that with the developments of the sixteenth century the writers of the Church of England were very much concerned, as against Rome, to prove that they could boast of as ancient a pedigree as possible for their own devotions, and that in what were charged to be their innovations they were only following the ancient practices of the Christian Church and, in some special cases, the ancient practices of the Church of England. Moreover, the exuberant nationalism of sixteenth century England was as eager to justify her devotion as her literature or her national pedigree with the appeals to antiquity so dear to the heart of the Renaissance.

Such developments were, however, always more or less dependent upon the exigencies of the religious conflicts of the time. It is interesting to note, for instance, that a work like John Philips' *The Perfect Path to Paradise,* first published in 1588, makes no mention of the fact, obvious to any reader acquainted with the Breviary, that his prayers are very heavily indebted to the ancient liturgy. Rather the very long description which in the fashion of the time he appends to the title dwells on everything else but that fact. But when in 1627 something of an Anglican Book of Hours was re-published from an Elizabethan edition with the approval of the Bishop of London, then on the very title-page considerable stress was laid on its ancient sources: *A Collection of Priuate Deuotions in the Practice of the Ancient Church, called, The Houres of Prayer. As they were much after this manner published by Authoritie of Eliza. 1560. Taken Out of the Holy Scriptures, the Ancient Fathers, and the Diuine Seruice of our owne Church.* In other words, when 1627 came, the English Church was in somewhat the same strategic necessity as that of 1560, this time against the Puritans and the Independents. But in the years between there was greater freedom from the exigencies

of controversy, and the devotional writer was left free to do his best work, appropriating as he saw fit without much doctrinal pre-occupation and more or less unconsciously giving to what he borrowed his own distinctive flavor.

Some of these collections of prayers are designed for special purposes and focused to those ends. *The Perfect Path to Paradise*, noted above, is an example of a fairly definite limitation in objective, for the bulk of the prayers and meditations which the author presents are concerned in some way or other with that most popular of all the religious themes of the period, repentance. *The Embassador between Heauen and Earth, betweene God and Man* is occupied chiefly with the vanity of things earthly and the precariousness of our tenure of this unsatisfactory life and the consequent prudence of taking some thought for what is to come after its certain end. It is a subject for which almost any seventeenth century religious writer might be counted upon for sympathy, and the unidentified W. C. responsible for this book handles the theme with the energy of conviction. It is the type of thing which we are inclined to consider most characteristic of the time.

Another favorite type is the collection of prayers for the aid of the sick and the dying. There are a good many of these collections, written from every angle of religious belief and interest. Taylor's *Holy Dying* is the most famous, but it will be noticed later in its proper place among the masterpieces of this literature. The *Manual of Directions for the Sick* which Richard Drake gathered from the papers of Lancelot Andrewes and published in 1648 is another. But the influence of these two collections belongs to a later period. For the beginning of our period probably the most representative book of this type is the famous collection of prayers (and instructions) which the Puritan leader, Thomas Becon, composed some time before 1560 and published under the appropriate title of *The Sicke mannes Salue*.

In general, however, the scope of the collections of prayers is much larger, for most of them cover more or less the whole gamut of the Christian life. There are prayers for every season and for every occasion. There are prayers for fasts and for feasts, there are prayers for taking physic, and prayers for being hanged. There are prayers for masters and for servants, for great nobles

and for ploughmen There are prayers for special occasions, and prayers for every day in the week, and in some cases for almost every hour in the day Some of these collections afford pretty complete prayer books for all manner of men, for all manner of times Of these *The Crums of Comfort,* compiled by Michael Sparke, the well-known Puritan publisher, is a very good example A book like this inevitably raises the question of the relation which its compiler intended it to bear to the Book of Common Prayer It is quite obvious that a good many of these writers, Sparke among them, would not approve of the existing Book of Common Prayer, but most even of these would take for granted the necessity of some sort of official book or at least order, for public prayer

At any rate, these books of private devotion are usually more or less supplementary to the official book, concentrating on the kind of prayers that the individual church member would like to use in his own home for his own particular needs Usually they are less formal, more detailed for specific occasions, more particular in every way than the official book, more homely, and often more intimate In such cases the question of competition would hardly arise But some of these private devotional manuals are so complete with prayers for every sort of occasion, short of formal divine service, that it is impossible but that in some quarters at least and in some fields they should encroach upon the preserves of the official book Particularly does one suspect this when he finds in prefaces and addresses some of the watch-words of Puritanism and upon the title-pages the names of authors and publishers who, like Michael Sparke, had been in difficulty for their disregard of censorship and trade regulations in the printing of religious books

A number of these prayer books go far beyond forms of prayer in their provision of aids to the devout life. Featley's *Ancilla Pietatis,* for instance, provides not only an appropriate assortment of prayers, for "the Christian Feasts and Fasts, the Weeks of the yeere, the daies of the Weeke" but also an impressive accompaniment of instructions and hymns to go with the prayers This is unusual in its completeness, but the provision of meditations to prepare for the prayers or to accompany them or to follow them, depending on the author's esteem of meditation, is very frequent Indeed, the book of prayers and meditations is one of the most

popular types of the time, if we can judge from the frequency with which it occurs in this group

Then there is the book that is mainly a book of meditations Books that are purely books of meditations are rare Perhaps the best example of this type is *The Seauen Spiritual Exercises of a deuout Soule Containing the Life and Death of our Sauiour Christ compiled in seauen Meditations, replenished with most godly, and deuout motions, and seruing for the seauen dayes in the Weeke*, which John Budge published in 1613 The section of Christ's life chosen for the particular meditation is presented with considerable vividness by the author and then followed by prayers of thanks and petitions for spiritual help that at once spring immediately out of the subject of meditation and carry it forward by developing its significance for the spiritual life of the reader While the editor, an unidentified I B, offers no clue to the identity of his source, there can be no question of the continental origin of the following passage from the meditation on the circumcision "Be euer praised and glorified (O sweet Iesu) for that the eight day (according to the custome of other Infants) thou wouldest be circumcised, and diddest begin to shed thy bloud for the loue of mee, in thy most tender age, and that thou wouldst comfort me with ineffable consolation, wert called *Iesus,* a Sauiour, to save mee, that otherwise had vtterly perished "[12]

Much more characteristic of the time and of this body of devotional literature are the moralistic meditations, like the famous *Centuries* of Joseph Hall. These *Meditations and Vowes Diuine and Morall, Seruing for direction in Christian and Ciuill practise* were published in three groups or *Centuries,* first in 1605, and again in 1606, all dedicated to people of eminence, the first to Sir Robert Drury, famous as the patron of John Donne, the second to Lady Drury, and the third to Sir Edmond Bacon Like many others of this class these meditations are meditations only by courtesy, for they lack the sustained immediate application of the mind and the imagination and the feelings to one subject, that is the essence of meditation These meditations are rather what Joseph Hall more modestly terms them in his address to his patron, *aphorisms,* practical and improving thoughts for the benefit

[12] I B, *The Seauen Spiritual Exercises of a deuout Soule,* etc (London, 1613), p 12

of one who wishes to lead the good life They differ from the usual ethical-devotional treatise in being less analytic and less discursive, less hortatory, with more direct reference to the person who makes the reflections The lack of the hortatory is more than made up for by the sententiousness of the generalizations, yet even more characteristic is the note of personal resolution The following is not a bad example of the general scope and temper of these meditations "Each day is a new life, and an abbridgement of the whole I will so liue as if I accounted every day my first, and my last as if I began to liue but then, and should liue no more afterwards"[13]

This frankly moralistic bent is generally typical of the books of meditations as well as of the books on the Christian life, as, indeed, it is of all the devotional literature of the time Even the most spiritual of themes, that of the soul's intimate relations with God, is, as in Joseph Henshaw's *Horae Succisivae,* treated from the moralistic point of view The extent to which such a point of view may carry the immediate concern with religion out into the world is probably best seen in Anthony Stafford's *Meditations, and Resolutions* This work well deserves the further description of the title-page· "Moral, Divine, Political . Written for the instruction and bettering of Youth, but, especially, of the better and more Noble."

More inward are the books that consist chiefly of selections from Scripture directed to various ends Of these we have a very good example in *A Posie of Spirituall Flowers, Taken out of the Garden of the holy Scriptures, consisting of these sixe sorts*

"Hearts ease, The Soules solace,
True delight, Times Complaint,
The Worlds wonders, The doom of Sinners"

Gathered for the
Encouragement of beginners,
Direction of proceeders,
Meditation of good hearers,
Consolation of true beleeuers,
Expectation of Sions mourners,
Confusion of irrepentant sinners

[13] Joseph Hall, *Meditations and Vowes Diuine and Morall, Seruing for direction in Christian and Ciuill practise, A third Century* (2nd ed, London, 1606), No 11, p 24

In spite of that somewhat uncertain massing of emphasis that we find again and again in seventeenth century writing, it is clear that in this book of George Webbe's, printed in 1610, we have a real effort to provide adequate nourishment for various stages of spiritual progress The *Meditations and Prayers* which Sir John Conway first published in 1570 and now republished a year after Webbe's book, in 1611, under the delightful title of *The Poesie of Floured Prayers,* is even less systematic than the foregoing There is all the ingenious grace of a favorite convention of sixteenth century poetry and not the least of logic in the general plan of the book, which, as he says himself, disposes of the "Meditations and Prayers, gathered out of the Sacred Letters, and Vertuous Writers . in the fourme of the Alphabet, of the Queene her most excellent Maiesties Name" Happily, some of the material which Sir John Conway appended to this collection was of a spiritual quality that far transcended the artifices of sixteenth century courtiership

For all their moralizing and conventionality of form, there are a number of these books that nobly fulfil the function which Phineas Fletcher so charmingly defined in his own collection, called *Joy in Tribulation Or, Consolations for Afflicted Spirits* "Lastly, how welcome to a weary Traveller is good companie, who will goe along with him in the same way, and intend to lodge in the same Inne Much comfort therefore will arise to us from those practicall Scriptures, (Psalms, etc) For how are we refreshed in our journey by those pleasing conferences which we enjoy with those blessed Saints"[14]

The next large group of these books, classified with regard to contents, is to be found in the treatises on prayer Again, we will find considerable variety within the same type There is, first of all, the defence or panegyric of prayer, designed to commend a neglected devotional form to the pious Thomas Tymme's *The Chariot of Deuotion* of 1618 is a very good example of this type in its defence of prayer against the monopoly of preaching and in its development of the "uses" of prayer Then there is the treatise on the how and the what and the why of prayer, like Bishop

[14] Phineas Fletcher, *Joy in Tribulation Or Consolations for Afflicted Spirits* (London, 1632), pp 93-94

George Downame's *A Godly and Learned Treatise of Prayer,* with its amazingly detailed and often very illuminating, often very dry, analyses of every possible aspect of prayer except the mystical There are books of directions on how to pray or to perform other duties of the Christian life, like Lewis Bayly's *The Practise of Pietie Directing a Christian how to walke that he may please God,* one of the most popular of the devotional treatises of the period, already in the third edition in 1613 and reaching at least its eleventh in 1619 After "A Plaine description of God" and appropriate meditations on that always timely theme, the peril of the "vnreconciled", Bayly becomes more practical with directions on "How to reade the Bible with profit and ease once ouer euery yeere," and "Rules to bee obserued in the singing of Psalmes," and "the right manner of holy Feasting"[15] Even in this very inward matter of devotion there is always a certain practicality, a focusing on action, highly characteristic of the temper of popular religion in the seventeenth century

Curiously enough, one of the most interesting of these "how" books is not a book at all, but a broadside, of which the British Museum copy is bound up with other proclamations and loose sheets of the period It is titled *The daily Examination, and Araignment of Sins, gathered out of the most Reverend the Primate of Ireland's Sermon at Lincolns-Inne Decemb. 3, 1648* It is an interesting subject of speculation whether the same people who bought up the usual broadside of the period, often indecent or crude enough, and usually light-minded, patronized the Primate of Ireland's effort to bring religion to the people who would not come to religion As one would expect of Usher, it is clear, direct, and vigorous

This broadside makes a very good introduction to another group of the devotional books, and that is made up of those in which the interest in pure devotion is subordinate to or incidental to a treatment of the whole problem of the Christian life Here there is probably greater homogeneity of purpose than in any other group of these books For in this period, when the eschatology of the time played so important a part in all men's thinking, the

[15] Lewis Bayly, *The Practise of Pietie Directing a Christian how to walke that he may please God* (11th ed , London, 1619), sigs A_{10}-A_{11}^{v}

problem of life for the religiously earnest took the form of the problem of salvation The urgent question was the ancient one, "Lord, what shall I do to be saved?" The most urgent occasion for the consideration of that question was, of course, the eve of death The collections of prayers for the help of the sick and the dying have already been noticed But something should be said here of the instructions for the sick and the dying that often form a part of such collections and of the treatises on how to die well that may be said to constitute a devotional type in themselves The most famous of the type is, of course, Taylor's *Holy Dying,* but that will be considered later For a book that shaped devotional thought and feeling in the period which we are studying, Thomas Becon's *The Sicke mannes Salue* will serve as well as any

This work enjoyed an enormous vogue, for some ten editions still survive from the sixteenth century, and a half dozen more from our period. Of these the latest bears the date 1632[16] This continuing popularity was well deserved, for the *Sicke mannes Salue* is a very fine thing of its kind As usual, the full title gives a very good notion of the contents of the book. *The Sicke mannes Salue, wherein the faithful Christians may learne both how to behaue them selues paciently and thankefully in the tyme of sickenes, and also vertuously to dispose their temporall goods, and finally to prepare them selues gladly and godly to dye* The book is written in the form of a dialogue between a sick man, Epaphroditus, and three of his friends This conversation covers pretty nearly the whole of contemporary theology, particularly the controverted portions, and all the etiquette of dying from the last detail of making a model will to the confession of faith of the dying Christian But at the same time it is highly dramatic, with a certain realistic vigor that makes even the lengthy theological discussions in which the book abounds lively and interesting

But not all of the writers on the pressing necessity of knowing how to be saved waited for the ultimate emergency of death Many began their attack upon the problem at a distance, with more of an appeal to prudent foresight than to immediate anxiety. Paul Baynes was one, with the publication in 1618 of his *Briefe*

[16] Pollard and Redgrave

Directions vnto a Godly Life Wherein euery Christian is furnished with most necessary Helps for the furthering of him in a godly course heere vpon earth, that so hee may attaine Eternall Happinesse in Heauen Paul Baynes' approach to this problem is essentially spiritual, with much stress on the inner life of prayer and meditation The same approach along the theological lines of justification and sanctification is taken by George Downame, Bishop of Derry, in 1620 Like the primate of Ireland a quarter of a century later, the Bishop of Derry evidently believed in giving religion a popular appeal, for he called his treatise, *The Christian Arte of Thriuing Whereby a Man may become rich to God* In spite of the somewhat forbiddingly theological approach to the problem the author again has a genuinely spiritual conception of his subject

Some of the same sense of the urgent gravity of the matter breathes in the very title of another of these treatises of salvation, a title which may well have inspired Bunyan's *Holy War* It is Thomas Broade's *A Christians Warre Wherein Is Laid Open the nature of our spirituall aduersarie, and the manner how we must withstand his temptations,* published in 1613 with the fitting inscription on its title-page of the text of Ephes. 6 11 "Put on the whole armour of God, that you may be able to stand against the assaults of the Deuill" To the modern mind with more comfortable, if any ideas about the next world and the universe that lies outside the well-lighted bounds of this, these salvational treatises come a little coldly. It is not easy for us to kindle to what was in more senses than one a burning subject to the well-instructed seventeenth century consciousness But there can be no question of the hold of this theme on the mind of that time. There is even a dramatic zest to it, which the modern mind must make some effort to understand if it is not to miss one of the most important sources of imaginative energy in this literature

But not all saw the field of life so simply or so strenuously The very title of *The Practise of Quietness* suggests that its author, G W [George Webbe], who first published it in 1615, was of a very different temper, a surmise borne out by the description that follows on the title-page: "Directing a Christian how to

liue quietly in this troblesome world," and by the general tenor of the work There must have been many even among the right-minded who found the high ardors of the seventeenth century a little trying There is some weariness of the conflicts of the more strenuous in Anthony Stafford's *Niobe Dissolved into a Nilus* of 1611, the nature of which is revealed in the rather succulent description on the title-page: "or His Age drown'd in her own tears · . Wherein the vanitie, and villanie of the Age, and the miserie of Man are so painted to the life, as that it will make a man long to leaue this painted life, to come to that true and eternall one" Needless to say, Stafford's treatise proves much less sensational in the reading than in the title

In general the treatises of Christian ethics are much broader than these titles suggest The seventeenth century moralist and casuist had a very lively sense of the capabilities and the limitations of human nature As a result, there are several treatises of Christian ethics in this group that show a moderation and a high degree of common sense that are not always duly recognized by students of seventeenth century life and character There is, for instance, Richard Bifield's *The Light of Faith,* published in 1630 with the following description on the title-page, which shows how conscious this effort for sense and moderation could be. "The Light of Faith, And, Way of Holinesse Shewing What to belieue, and for what to striue together, earnestly contend, and suffer for in this contending age And how to liue in all estates, conditions, and degrees of relation, according to this faith In both, deliuering (as neere as might be, in the life of Scripture phrase.) only things necessary, as we meane to be saued, and auoiding vtterly things arbitrary, that distract, rather than direct a Christian" Moreover, in some cases at least, this moderation is accompanied by a very practical regard for the particular worldly obligations and opportunities of the godly We have already noticed the very interesting and sympathetic guides for merchants Even more detailed and explicit is the guide for the great and the responsible of the world which W Vaughan drew up in 1600 in *The Golden-groue . A worke very necessary for all such, as would know how to gouerne themselues, their houses, or their countrey* It is a veritable encyclo-

pedia of seventeenth century life, ranging from a discussion of "Why housekeeping now-adaies is decayed" to a discussion of large questions of state like that of "Whether two religions may be tolerated in one kingdome?"

When one turns from books such as this last with its wide range over many of the most urgent phenomena of contemporary political and social life to the books in this group which deal most consistently and devotedly with the inward life, he is conscious of a difference of such magnitude and intensity as to suggest a complete change in physical and spiritual dimension In another way they are just as characteristic of the time, and in still another far more, for here we surprise the seventeenth century mind in some of its most inward aspects Here we have a chance to probe into some of its most persistent yearnings and its most persistent fears As we have seen in an earlier chapter, one of the constant preoccupations of the seventeenth century religious mind, laboring as it did under the dispensation of Predestination with a positive energy of spirit that made it unwilling to relapse into the inertia of fatalism, against which its adversaries had so strenuously warned it, was the problem of the conviction of salvation To put more simply a question which was one of the most direct practical moment, "How can one tell that he is really saved?" As we have seen, it was a question the solution of which was fraught with many perils, and the perils of which were constantly kept before the Anglican mind by the gibes of its adversaries on the one side, and the excesses of its adversaries on the other When we come to take up in detail the dominant ideas of this literature, we shall study this preoccupation in its many fascinating involutions, but for the present, in our preliminary survey of the contents of this field we shall merely note the large part which this question plays explicitly in the make-up of this literature

One of the most vigorous of the treatises of the great Puritan divine, William Perkins, was devoted to this *A Case of Conscience, the Greatest that ever was How a man may know whether he be the child of God, or no,* etc This question was one of the main concerns of Arthur Dent's *The Plaine Mans Path-way to Heauen,* expressly set forth in the title-page description · "Wherein

euery man may clearly see whether hee shall bee saued or damned" It also plays a very large part in John Preston's *A Heavenly Treatise of the Divine Love of Christ,* in which much space is given to showing how a man may be sure that he really loves Christ This queasiness of conscience seems to have been especially common among the pious of the time who inclined to Puritanism The obscure Puritan sufferer who wrote *The Groans of the Spirit* devotes no small portion of his book to the problem of the authenticity of prayer, that is to the consideration of what the spirit is in which the devout soul should pray, and how he may be sure that he is praying in that spirit As we shall see when we come to take up the problem of the Inner Light in these books as a whole, such anxiety was the inevitable consequence of staking so much on what was after all so largely at the mercy of the intuition of the individual

It is pleasant to turn from these anxious books to happier ones of more broadly entrenched certainty that dwell serenely on the goodness of God and the joy of those who living in tune with that goodness know its delights rather than its austerities A treatise on why we should love God is, like a treatise on how we should love God, something in the main stream of seventeenth century piety, but when one finds among these books one on *Christs Loveliness,* then he is conscious of something outside of the main course of the time. And this is true, for Thomas Watson's book of that name belongs to a later date than that of most of these books, 1657 But after scattered references to the *Canticle of Canticles* in many of the earlier works that we have been studying, it is interesting to come across a book that takes the *Canticle of Canticles* for its foundation and devotes itself to what is in the main an explication of the meaning of this favorite text of the mystics for the lover of Christ. But as usual the author is not content to leave his reader to the joys of pure contemplation. The call to action is deep in all seventeenth century English religious feeling, and unique as this book is in many respects, it is at one with its time in this

The books of the felicity of the godly referred to above are well within the bounds of our period so far as significance and

spiritual affinities are concerned, but in actual date the first of them are a little earlier The first to be noted here is an anonymous work that goes back at least to the year 1568, *A short and pretie Treatise touching the perpetuall Reioyce of the godly, euen in this lyfe* The author must have been sensitive to the usual charge of the unregenerate that however edifying the contemplation of the souls of the godly might be, the effect of their persons is not always winsome Indeed, some things that the author of this treatise says suggest that the sobriety of aspect of the godly was sometimes mistaken for melancholy, not by any means an asset for those interested in commending religion to an age avid beyond most for delight So this author undertakes to convince the reader that the melancholy aspect of the godly is often only an illusion of the uninitiated In his effort to make this thesis good he shows considerable ingenuity, and if he is not always entirely convincing, he is at least illuminating in a matter where there may well be two ways of interpreting the same phenomenon.

To only a slightly later period belongs another one of these joyous treatises that make such a pleasant oasis of hope and delight in a desert of contemporary controversy. It is in its execution neither so charming nor so eloquent as *The Perpetuall Reioice of the godly,* but it has its own picturesque quality, of which the title is a rather gorgeous fore-taste *The Glorious and Beautiful Garland of Mans Glorification containing the godlye Misterie of Heauenly Ierusalem, the Helmet of our Saluation· the coming of Christ in the Fleshe for our glorie and his glorious coming in the ende of the worlde, to crowne Men with crowns of eternal glorie* This was printed at London in 1585 But something of the same note is struck nearly forty years later in a book in which, to judge from the cool title, one would least expect it, in Robert Bolton's *Some Generall Directions for a Comfortable Walking with God* There the same joyous anticipation of the beauty and glory of the life to come is expressed with even more of glow and splendor of eloquence

In a certain sense these last books represent the high water mark of seventeenth century devotion, so far at least as that mystical marriage of goodness and joy and beauty which we are wont

to think of as the foundation of the mystic's ecstacy is concerned That in no way means that they are the finest or the most influential, for every age like every man has its own particular talent, and sometimes its greatest things are done in a lesser genre Indeed, in the hands of a genius upborne by the strength and enthusiasm of his age a lesser genre may come to challenge the eminence of one hitherto thought superior As we shall see, this was true to an unusual degree of the devotional books of this period.

CHAPTER VIII

The English Books of Devotion—Methods

Inevitably, much has already been suggested incidentally and casually in the preceding pages that will give some idea of the variety of method found in these treatises, a variety comparable to the variety of the contents of the books involved In a certain sense one can hardly speak of such a thing as method abstracted from the contents of a book, for method will inevitably vary not only from subject to subject but still more from author to author. For that reason any effort at generalization must necessarily be regarded as very rough, even rougher than the effort to reach some conclusion as to the contents of these books as a group But though rough and of limited value for any particular author or book, such an effort will prove illuminating for the group, both for affording some idea of the nature of the group as a whole and for throwing some light on the mental processes that produced this body of literature Therefore, it has seemed best to concentrate on a very few methods of development, and those the most typical. Naturally, they are found best in books that represent a fairly large section of this literature in content as well as method

As we saw in our survey of the subject-matter of these books, one of the most common types, if not the most common, is the collection of prayers for private and semi-private devotion These are usually accompanied by some sort of directions for preparation for prayer or for the use of that particular collection We shall look at both

As good an example as any, of these collections of prayers is to be found in *The Crums of Comfort,* a collection which Michael Sparke made out of rare and forgotten works and entered for publication in 1623. This proved to be one of the most popular books of the period, reaching its seventh edition in that of 1628,

apparently the first of which copies still survive Like most of these books, *The Crums of Comfort* begins with a definition of prayer, in this case a very simple and unpretentious one, one that however inadequate it may seem from the modern point of view, was of the sort likely to commend itself to the widest circle of his potential readers. "Prayer is a serious lifting vp of our hearts vnto God, in the name of Christ Iesus, either to craue needful things, or giue thankes for things receiued "[1]

Sparke then proceeds to the elaboration of a detailed course of preparation for prayer This preparation lays a stress on the inward disposition of the soul that should be remembered when Sparke's initial definition of prayer is judged Moreover, he is simple and practical in his counsel

> *In thy preparation endeavour to bee*
> 1 Truely humbled in thy selfe, in sight of thy sinnes, and sence of the occasions of thy prayer
> 2 To bee raised vp in some comfortable assurance of Gods mercie in pardonning thy sinnes, and of his fauour, to heare and helpe thee through Iesus Christ[2]

With the same combination of practical simplicity and insight, the author follows this up with:

> *A good meanes to helpe vs in our preparation, and to stir vs vp to prayer*
> 1. A pious consideration of the greatnesse and goodnesse of our heauenly Father
> 2. A sence of our owne vnablenes to craue of God his holy Spirit, to assist vs in our prayers
> 3 The present reading, or serious (though briefe) meditating on some such parts of Gods word, as either make for our humilation, or faith, or may come nearer or concerne, the speciall occasions of our prayers[3]

To this he adds another piece of practical advice, the reminder that "Almes and fasting are good meanes to further our priuate deuotions as well as the more publike "[4] And it should be further noted that in each case Sparke, who had suffered imprisonment for his Puritan resistance to Laud's administration, adds the appropriate Scripture text

[1] Michael Sparke, *The Crums of Comfort* (7th ed , London, 1628), sig A_8
[2] *Ibid* , sig A_8
[3] *Ibid* , sigs A_8-A_8^v
[4] *Ibid* , sig A_8^v

The plan and arrangement of the prayers that follow is thoroughly characteristic

A Morning prayer at our first rising from sleepe
Another Morning Prayer
An Euening Prayer
A Morning Prayer for Seruants
An Euening Prayer for a Seruant
A Prayer to bee said when we wash in the Morning
A Noone Prayer
A Prayer before Meate
A thanksgiuing after Meate
A Prayer before meate
A Thanksgiuing after meate
A Meditation at Midnight
Holy Sentences, contayning usefull matter for meditation
A Prayer for Sanctifying Graces
Sunday Morning Prayer
A Prayer to bee said when wee wash in the Morning
A Noone Prayer
Sunday Nights Prayer
Sunday midnights Soliloque
A Morning Prayer for Munday
An Euening Prayer for Munday
A Prayer at any time in the night, in time of danger or feare
A Trance or Soliloque at midnight
Saturday morning Prayer
Saturday Nights Prayer
A Prayer before a Sermon
A Prayer after a Sermon
A Prayer to bee said before the receiuing of the Communion
A Prayer and Thanksgiuing after the receiuing of the holy Communion
A Prayer to bee vsed before Catechising
A Prayer to bee vsed after Catechising
For remission of sinnes
A Prayer for Gods Graces
A Prayer for a quiet Conscience
A Prayer against wicked and carnall thoughts
An humble Confession of sinnes
A Prayer to bee said of all that are fallen into Pouertie
A Prayer in Prosperity
A Prayer for all in distresse at Sea, by Storme and tempest
A Prayer for all that trauell by Land
The Sicke mans Prayer
A Prayer at the houre of Death (to be said by friends for the dying brother)
A Trance at the time of Death

A Heauenly Meditation
A forme of the Thankesgiving and Prayer, to be vsed of godly Christians in their Families
A Prayer for the acknowledging of Gods goodnes to Mankinde
A thankful Meditation for the knowledge we haue of Iesus Christ crucified
A Prayer in time of Warre
A special Remedy for a sicke Soule, whereby the Sinner may recouer himselfe from the valley of Teares, to the Hill of Ioy, Or, a medicine for the Plague
Verses of Mans Mortalitie with an other of the hope of his resurrection

In spite of the fact that nobody could pretend that it is exciting reading, it has seemed worthwhile to present this table of contents at some length In the first place, it shows the wide and exceedingly practical range of this type of book In the second, it shows that looseness of logical organization that is characteristic of the seventeenth century, when the rigor of scholastic analysis has broken down but not the scholastic taste for elaborate classifications, and the new discipline of scientific organization is as yet unborn What it does not show is the scale of development of the themes suggested or the lines along which that development is carried on

For the first, one example will suffice, and most readers will be willing to take the author's word without asking for proof in the form of extensive quotation The "forme of Thanksgiuing and Prayer, to be vsed of godly Christians in their Families" takes up a little more than twenty-five pages of the British Museum copy of 1628 It is true that this particular volume is a very little one, the sort of book that a lady might carry in a bag or pocket (the charming needlework cover of the book suggests such use), but twenty-five pages of even this size must have been hard on the knees and the attention It is no wonder that the devout of the seventeenth century so often prayed for help against distraction Such prayers are to the short-tethered modern attention a recognizable sign of humanity in a region where we are sometimes tempted to think human nature must have been very different

It is harder to indicate briefly the lines along which the actual prayers in such a volume proceed Certain aspects will be inevitably taken up when we consider some of the dominant ideas in these books, and when we come to consider the final literary effect,

but it seems worthwhile at this point to indicate briefly the direction of these prayers by a few selections from the different types offered The beginning of the "Noone Prayer," for instance, is dramatic in the way it brings before the reader's mind those contrasts between the glory of God and the vileness of men that were so dear to the heart of the seventeenth century: "O Lord God, glorious in Maiesty, strong in power, mighty in deliuerance· I poore worme, dust and ashes of the earth, present my selfe before thee . ."[5] This may suggest to some minds an unwholesome other-worldliness, but such anxiety is not long after reassured in the "Morning Prayer for Monday", in which the pious are made to ask quite unabashedly that they may be kept thriving in their estates[6] Probably this whole subject of the other-worldliness of the seventeenth century needs careful reconsideration, for the worldly seem always to exaggerate strangely the bounds of the preoccupations of the unworldly.

Everything one knows of all but a few seventeenth century preachers, and what one knows of the wonted copiousness of even those choice spirits, makes the following "Prayer before a Sermon" seem peculiarly appropriate. "O grant most gracious Father, that our thoughts may not be carried away with any vaine illusions or bad imaginations: Grant that we be not ouercome with sleepe or drowsines "[7] But we should be mistaken if we concluded from this that all of *The Crums of Comfort* must be concerned with what may be called the housekeeping of the soul. There is a far higher flight, imaginatively as well as spiritually, in the "Prayer and Thanksgiuing after the receiuing of the holy Communion," in which the soul that has just received addresses God the Father

> Thou hast made him a Sacrifice for the necessary food and nourishment of our Soules Thou Gauest way to the piercing of his sides, from whence issued Water and Blood, that we might know how wee came cleansed from our sinnes, and redeemed from damnation Yea (O Lord God) thou hast presented vs in this Sacrament the whole Tragedy of his Passion, that we out of his sorrowes might recouer joyes, out of his grones might be comforted, out of his sighes and teares, might haue ours put into his bottle, and out of his death, be presented to life euerlasting[8]

[5] *Ibid*, sig B_9^v

[6] *Ibid*, sigs D_2-D_2^v

[7] *Ibid*, sig E_8^v

[8] *Ibid*, E_9^v-E_{10}

Such a collection, then, as this of *The Crums of Comfort* affords a very wide variety of prayers for every possible occasion These prayers are arranged in an intelligible if not too logical manner, and they are given in complete detail The result is that any man who used such a volume as this would find himself provided with a fairly complete guide for his private devotions, and that with very little demand made upon him for originality of thought or feeling This does not mean that the prayers of such a man might not often be very profoundly personal, very intimately the expression of his most unique feelings Indeed, there are those who are inclined to think that the originality of perfect and full realization may be even profounder on occasion and in certain fields than the originality of invention, preoccupied as that must be with the initial difficulties of self-expression But it does mean that in the case of a book like this the reader found everything ready to his hand, with consequently more demand upon alertness than upon initiative, and greater adequacy in a general way rather than particular appropriateness in the prayers themselves

This peculiar defect was met in another type of prayer book, naturally much rarer than the first. This type endeavoured to teach the reader to make up his own prayer to suit his own need But unlike some of the treatises on prayer it did not content itself with explication of the theory and exhortation to the practise but tried to furnish the reader with the materials of prayer and a chart showing him how to construct his own prayers on his own occasions It bears to the ordinary manual of prayers like *The Crums of Comfort* something of the same relation that the meccano sets of girders and bolts and construction pieces sold for boys bear to the usual children's toy bridges and houses and forts Of this type, the most elaborate and the most practical which the present writer has seen is to be found in John Clarke's *Holy Incense for the Censers of the Saints* of 1634. As usual in these books, written as they were when a title-page if not a title was supposed to show what a book was about, the title-page is illuminating: "A Method of Prayer, with matter and formes in selected Sentences of Sacred Scripture Also A Praxis upon the Holy Oyle shewing the Vse of Scripture-Phrases And Choyse Places taken

out of the singing Psalmes, digested into a Method of Prayer and Praises"

There is nothing novel in the presentation of a group of selections from Scripture, it was one of the stock types of seventeenth century devotion Nor was there anything new in the idea of arranging and of working together these selections so as to make coherent prayers or meditations. No small part of the *Imitation of Christ* is just that sort of thing The originality of this forgotten author lies in the fact that he tried to show his reader how to do it for himself Occasionally, the resulting method reminds one a little of the sheet of suggestions in the back of the Gideons' Bible, but there is nothing limited or mechanical in the spirit in which the author set to work This is shown especially in what he says when he is urging his reader to the practise of devotion.

> Appoint and set a part some time once every day, seriously and solemnely to cast up the eye of thy *Faith*, on that never-fading crowne of life, which after an inch of time shall for ever rest upon thy head Often withdraw your selfe *apart*, imparting unto God your *griefes*, wants *desires* Walke with God on the top of Mount *Tabor* once a day— *Prayer* in secret will be unto *thee* an unspeakable comfort, a testimony that thou art not left to thy selfe [9]

What the author does is to gather together a great many suitable texts, group them together for their bearing upon some one subject of possible meditation or petition, and then index them for easy reference, as "In Afflictions,"[10] "Aged,"[11] "Anger,"[12] "Against Apostacie and Backsliding in Religion,"[13] and so forth Even this list is not meant to be final or exhaustive, for the author suggests that the reader enlarge the list with his own selections, as his own occasions require The method of this use the author explains in

> A *Praxis* upon the *Holy* Oyle, shewing the *Vse* of the Scripture Phrases, *In* Praying, meditating, writing Letters, exhorting, comforting, reproving, etc, yea in any *Christian* dutie, on any occasion to be performed *For Example* Wouldst *thou* in the time of *dearth* and *famine*, insert a reasonable petition or two, into thy *prayers*, that God would please to provide for thee, thy family—and the poore—etc to remove this judgment, and send *plenty*—Turne then to the

[9] John Clarke, *Holy Incense for the Censers of the Saints* (London, 1634), pp 140-145
[10] *Ibid*, p 268 ff
[11] *Ibid*, p 271
[12] *Ibid*, p 272 ff
[13] *Ibid*, p 275 ff

> Heads, *Famine,* Poore, *Plenty,* provide—etc [14] Wouldst thou pray against *Hypocrisie,* and for *Sinceritie*—turne to those Heads, *Hypocrite—Sincere,* etc
> So for any other request—resolve it briefly into a Proposition—as thus, *Lord blesse unto mee thy Holy Word*—Here, looke but *Compellations* and titles of God—2 *Blesse* Sanctifice, *Prosper, etc* the ministry of thy *Gospell,* Scriptures—etc—So, Lord, grant me Pardon of my Sins Looke, *Grant*— Pardon—*Sinne*—etc—there thou shalt find words and matter And thus even any meane Christian, of ordinary parts, and invention, may be able soone to spinne, and draw out from many of those *Heads* (which Hee occasionally shall have neede to use) much heavenly matter and words, sweet Metaphors, Allegories—etc delightfull, and of good use, in *Prayer,* Conference, *Meditation,* Thanksgiving,—Writing, etc and on any subject whatsoever [15]

Some of the fruits of such a scheme must have been amusing, but it probably served its purpose of helping people whose need was greater than their power of expression, to relate their devotion to their own lives In doing that it undoubtedly made its contribution to that deepening of spiritual life that was so much the concern of the thoughtful of the time For the novice at least, this book has the merit of setting forth clearly and simply a definite method of prayer which he can follow with ease

It is harder to follow the method of the books of meditation. In the first place, they give an abundance of opportunity for that vagrancy of imagination from which seventeenth century piety prayed so often and so passionately to be delivered And in the second, they richly exhibit all those defects of seventeenth century methods of classification which we have noted in the arrangement of the prayer books In many cases there is little point to noting the method of the book, for it does not amount to much. So only one or two examples of the book of meditations will be noted here, because what has already been said about the prayer books will apply quite well enough to this field

The simplest type of meditation is of course that which follows a section of, say Scripture narrative, with appropriate reflections on the matters thereby brought into the foreground of the reader's consciousness Usually, these meditations are of two sorts, strictly doctrinal or moralistic A reaffirmation of sound doctrine, sometimes a reprobation of unsound, and a call to improved action either on one's own part or on one's neighbor's part

[14] *Ibid*, p 223
[15] *Ibid*, pp 267-268

constitute the normal material of these books The intellectual and the ethical are the two driving forces of the seventeenth century meditation in England.

The best way of showing what this means is to set side by side two passages from these books, one of them typical and the other exceptional *The Seauen Spirituall Exercises of a deuout Soule* has been already noticed in the preceding chapter as probably of immediate continental origin, modified to suit the religious temper of England One passage, especially, lends itself to our purpose, because it is easy to discern in two successive paragraphs the continental strain and the English strain of devotional meditation "Be euer praised and glorified (o sweet Iesu) for that the eight day (according to the custome of other Infants) thou wouldest be circumcised, and diddest begin to shed thy bloud for the loue of mee, in thy most tender age, and that thou wouldst comfort me with ineffable consolation wert called Iesus, a Sauiour; to saue mee, that otherwise had vtterly perished

"I beseech thee (O Lord) to account mee in the number of thy elect, and to write my name in the booke of the blessed. And that thou wouldest circumcise my hart from all superfluitie, that is, from idle and hurtfull speeches, from vniust workes, and from impure and vaine thoughts, and cogitations"[16] The contrast between these two paragraphs is not merely one of temper, one warmer, perhaps to a different point of view and taste more sentimental, the other dry and abstract But the fundamental difference is in intention In the one case, it is contemplation as an approach to communion that is stressed, in the other, resolution as a prelude to action. It is an example of a very fundamental difference between two ways of looking at the religious life that are characteristic of the time

A different and for this group far more typical method of meditation is illustrated in a book of the next decade, Thomas Taylor's *Meditations, from the Creatures*, which was printed with his *A Man in Christ* in 1628. This treatise is devoted to a very elaborate meditation on the possible religious conclusions to be drawn from a contemplation of the natural universe, the work

[16] I B, *The Seauen Spiritual Exercises of a deuout Soule*, pp 12 13

of God's hands One example will very well illustrate its method It is the third of the meditations from the heavens

> The forme of the heauens being round and circular, this may minde vs of,
> 1 The infinitenesse of the maker a circle is an infinite figure
> 2 The perfection of God, a circle being the most perfect and capacious figure Hence is said, In my father's house are many mansions, *John* 14, 2
> 3 As the circle of the heauens is equally distant from the point and center of the earth It may minde vs that heauen is equally distant to all beleeuers, and In euery nation, hee that feareth God, & worketh righteousnesse, shall be accepted[17]

Something of the same dryness of technique infects the method of some of the treatises of prayer That habit of painstaking and systematic analysis which is so striking a feature of a devotional masterpiece like *The Private Devotions* of Bishop Andrewes is to be found, often in a less rigorous degree, of course, in many of the treatises of prayer of the time One notable example is George Downame's *A Godly and Learned Treatise of Prayer,* published in 1640 Nothing better evidences the systematic quality of Downame's procedure than the table of contents which he drew up for his book So orderly and so explicit is this table of contents that for once we shall find it possible in a very little space to gain some notion of the way in which an author handles his material For a scrutiny of the table of contents gives a very good idea not only of the contents but also of the method of this treatise

[17] Thomas Taylor, *Meditations, from the Creatures,* printed with *A Man in Christ,* etc (London, 1628), pp 26-27

Chapter 5	Of the great and wonderful efficacy of prayer	21
Chapter 6	Whether by prayer we alwayes obtein our desires	26
Chapter 7	Of the profit of prayer	29
Chapter 8	A threefold necessity of prayer .	32
Chapter 9	Who are to perform the duty of prayer	33
Chapter 10	None but the faithfull can praye effectually and acceptably	37
	That the impenitent cannot pray acceptably	39
	In what respect God heareth the wicked	47
Chapter 11	That God alone is to be called upon	51
Chapter 12	That we ought not to invocate any creature	58
	That Angels and Saints are not to be invocated	59
	That Saints departed are not to be invocated .	61
Chapter 13	That we must conceive of God in prayer as he hath revealed himselfe in his word	64

The above represents only a third of the work, but it is enough to give an idea of the general method of composition of this and a good many other treatises of prayer

Even more diverse in a way is the organization of the typical religious book of ethics of the time, for if the main intention of the book, as it is of most in this group, is to ensure correct conduct in any and all circumstances, the range of topics taken up in the course of the treatise is from the nature of things bound to be as wide as the theatre of this world's action Again, one particularly characteristic example may serve for the whole class W Vaughan, "Master of Artes, and student in the Ciuill law," published in 1600 *The Golden groue, moralized in three books, A worke very necessary for all such, as would know how to gouerne themselues, their houses, or their countrey* As his title suggests, he is trying to draw up a complete guide to the good life In the grand manner of the seventeenth century he begins with a chapter on the most fundamental of all considerations for a religious theory of values, God's nature, and follows this up with a second chapter on the knowledge of God Then, again in the seventeenth century manner he stops for a chapter on that great seventeenth century bugaboo, atheists These three chapters make up the first part of the first book of his treatise The second part begins logically with a chapter on man and with more strenuous coherence follows this up with chapters on "The soule," "That a man hath but one soule," and "The immortalitie of the

soule" This part is uncommonly orderly and consistent in its procedure

This logical grip relaxes a little in the next It begins well enough with chapters on virtue and vice It becomes hortatory, "That a man must not delay to become vertuous," it grows helpful, with its "Remedies against vice," and then it sweeps back to first principles with chapters on justice and injustice But again it relapses (from the logical point of view alone) from the general to the particular in its inquiry, "Whether it bee lawfull for one to kill himselfe," and its assertion, "That we should not patiently indure all iniuries" So it goes Sometimes the results of this habit of shifting from the general to the particular are rather comic The eighth part, for instance, opens with a consideration of clemency and courtesy, proceeds to a chapter on modesty and bashfulness, and to chapters, one to each subject, on affability, indulgence, pride, scurrility or scoffing, and then breaks suddenly from the ranks of these abstractions to inquire "Whether stage-playes ought to be suffered in a common-wealth," and then returns to the ranks again with a chapter on cruelty It is these sudden excursions from the straight line of an analysis that make seventeenth century treatises even on very abstract subjects such exciting reading, for however soporific the present chapter may be, there is always the possibility of truant relief around the corner

For the more inward, the more specifically religious book on the Christian life, Daniel Featley's *Ancilla Pietatis* of 1626 will do as well as any As the sub-title suggests, this book is intended as an aid to private devotion, but quite fittingly it concerns itself with the propagation of the right state of mind in its reader Its method is clear in "The Admonition for Thursday Euening, be-

ing an Exhortation to Patience, the eighth *Beatitude*" Here the author himself very obligingly gives us an analysis

All true Christians must valiantly and cheerefully endure troubles for the Gospell in respect of

1 *God* his	Will Power Ordinance	
2 *Christ* his	Loue Example Sympathy with vs	
3 The Saints	Practise Encouragement	
4 The enemies	Conuersion or Conuiction	
5 Our selues who therby receiue	1 Tryall 2 Ioy 3 Assurance of *God's* loue 4 Quiet fruit of Righteousnes 5 Holinesse and perfection 6 Life 7 Protection 8 Honour before *God* 9 Inestimable rewards	1 In this life 2 In the life to come[18]

In a certain sense what Featley contemplates is a species of meditation, and it should be noted that in spite of his dry terms, he is also seeking some appeal to the imagination But, primarily, his goal is the achievement of a spiritual attitude, and in that sense his endeavor belongs to the ethical group of these treatises rather than to the purely meditative

With all their deviations from the strictly logical the treatises just discussed are, for this literature, notable examples of systematic procedure The general average is far lower Even so delightful a thing as Arthur Dent's *The Plaine Mans Path-way to Heauen* is by comparison random and heterogeneous. Nor is this surprising, for, after all, the initial purpose of the book of devotion even in the seventeenth century was not so much to analyze or to explain, as to arouse, and to warm, and to frighten, and to encourage With all the faith they put in right ideas these authors

[18] Featley, *op cit*, p 287

were not unaware of the old mediaeval dilemma *Meliora video, sed deteriora sequor* That is a problem over which logic has at best but little power As we now know, or perhaps rather we should say, as we now find names for an old experience, it is more a matter of imagination and of the subconscious mind than of the deliberately self-aware processes of the mind

It is for this reason that the examples of the dialogue method that we have are so interesting One of the most famous, Thomas Becon's *The Sicke mannes Salue,* has been already described in an earlier chapter Another is William Cowper's *A Most Comfortable and Christian Dialogue, between the Lord, and the Soule* of 1611 This is in its fundamental conception a mediaeval type And it begins with a certain mediaeval intimacy, but it soon assumes the characteristic homiletic accent of the seventeenth century In spite of that, the dialogue form gives a certain appositeness, a certain flexibility, not often found in the ordinary exhortation of the time The first speech of the Lord will serve as well as any to give some idea of its quality

> Let not (my beloued) the consideration of thy wants, defects and imperfections discourage thee remember that the mesure of grace which I haue giuen to my Saints vpon earth, I haue called it an earnest-pennie, and the first fruits of the spirit, to tell them that what euer grace they haue gotten, it is nothing in comparison of that which they wil get Seeke not therefore that in the earth, which I haue resolued to giue thee no wayes, till thou doest come to heauen [19]

It is always a delicate matter, this of man's putting his own words into his Maker's mouth, but there can be no question of the gain in impressiveness and in immediacy After all, the imagination is not beyond the reach of rhetoric

But the peculiar beauty of the dialogue method is seen in a much greater work, Dent's *Plaine Man's Path-way to Heauen,* a thoroughly indigenous thing which cannot be said to owe anything directly to the Middle Ages It is rather in the high road of the great dialogue tradition of all time It begins like a dialogue of Plato, rusticated in a Warwickshire village Its setting is not marble but timber and wattle, not in the spacious fields by the Ilissus but in a narrow Warwickshire lane do the parties to this dia-

[19] William Cowper, *A Most Comfortable and Christian Dialogue, betweene the Lord, and the Soule* (London, 1611), pp 37-38

logue meet They are not the golden youth of Athens but plain English rustics, and their talk is direct and simple, of homely matters Yet there is in these pages a certain spaciousness, a certain urbanity, in the best sense of an often-abused word, that makes one remember those greater conversations of greater men One feels here in peculiar sweetness and force that charm one is never far from in the seventeenth century

THEOL What make both [of] you heere at this time of the day? There is some occasion I am sure draweth you this way
ASUNE Indeed sir, we haue some litle businesse, for we came to talke with one of your Parish about a Cowe wee should buy of him
THEOL Hath my neighbour a Cow to sell?
ANTIL Wee are told he hath a very good one to sell but I am afraid at this time of the yeare wee shall finde deare ware of her
THEOL How deare? What doo you thinke a very good Cow may be worth?
ANTIL A good Cowe indeede at this time of the yeare, is worth very neare three pound, which is a great price
THEOL It is a great price indeed
PHILA I pray you M *Theologus,* leaue off this talking of kine, and worldly matters, and let vs enter into some speech of matters of Religion, whereby we may doo good, and take good one of an other
THEOL You say well, but it may be these mens businesse requireth haste, so as they cannot stay
ASUNE No sir, we are in no great haste, wee can stay two or three houres, for the dayes are long if we dispatch our businesse by night, it will serue our turne well enough
THEOL Then if it please you to walke to yonder Oake Tree, there is a goodly Arbour, and handsome seates, where we may all sit in the shaddowe, and conferre of heauenly matters [20]

• As we shall see when we come to look at the discussion of particular ideas in these books, the conversation which follows this auspicious opening is one of the most interesting in all this literature.

One more species of method should perhaps be noted here in spite of the fact that it is of very minor occurence in these treatises, and that is the use of the ejaculation The ejaculation has an ancient and honorable history in the story of religion. At its simplest it is probably little more than a sound device for the concentration of the attention The Hindu "Om" is a very highly

[20] Arthur Dent, *The Plaine Mans Path-way to Heauen* (London, 1601), pp 3-4

developed example of such a use Saint Augustine's famous cry, "O Beauty of all things Beautiful!" is a more elaborate example of the ejaculation with specific intellectual and imaginative content Perhaps that story which Bernard of Quintavalle tells of Francis of Assisi's passing the whole night in prayer with only one phrase said over and over again, "My God, my God!" is an even clearer example of the possibility of the ejaculation, for Bernard reports that Francis repeated that one cry all night with every variation of tenderness and joy and grief in his tones, as if the eye of his soul were fixed on the object of that salutation Of that sort of thing we do not find very much in these books, perhaps because the seventeenth century in its approach to religion was more intellectual in the discursive sense

But what we do find is significant, for the clearest example of the use of the ejaculation as an instrument of the devotional life is to be found in what we have already seen to be one of the most popular of all seventeenth century devotional treatises, *The Crums of Comfort* of Michael Sparke Near the beginning of that book the author suggests "Besides our more special deuotions at set times, we may vse Ejaculations at all times, vpon euery occasion, which are short desires of the heart, lifted vp to God with great feruency"[21] But this is very rare One suspects that such a method seemed too emotional, too unreflective for seventeenth century taste in general

On the whole, the methods of development followed in these books are fairly objective, more or less systematic, above all direct and simple One has a feeling that these authors wrote with their eyes directly on their chosen public From first to last they give the impression of being alertly sensitive and responsive to every impulse of that by no means logically exacting but always deeply earnest auditory That fact alone gives to even the most loose-jointed of these treatises a drive of energy far beyond the power of any mere skill of literary engineering

[21] Sparke, *The Crums of Comfort*, sig A_7

CHAPTER IX

The English Books of Devotion— Controlling Ideas

As one would expect, the controlling ideas of these books are in general the ideas that dominated the religious life of the time The English Church still officially accepted the main tenets of continental Protestantism, Justification by Faith, Predestination and Election, and the reliance on Scripture as the final authority In actual practice, of course, no one of these theories was applied with the rigor and literal consistency which a Calvin or John Knox had contemplated Indeed, as we have seen, a very large section of the English Church repudiated any such rigorous insistence, and only a small minority, in point of numbers probably very small, but convinced and aggressive, really contemplated the rigid adherence to the literal sense of these tenets that had characterized Geneva or Edinburgh The philosophy of the Via Media was as yet unborn, but the theory of a reasonable and moderate reformation, the logical result of an effort to rationalize the opportunistic compromises of the Elizabethan settlement, was the cornerstone upon which Hooker had reared the first great structure of distinctively Anglican theology This idea of a reasonable and moderate reformation in a century of passionate loyalties and uncompromising hostilities was something of a paradox, and the practical result was still more of a paradox For it involved, as we have seen, on the one hand an even violent adhesion to the watchwords of the Reformation, and on the other, when theory came to be put into practise, a hundred modifications and attenuations of the principles so passionately accepted

Nowhere is this essential paradox better illustrated than in the devotional books. Written as they were by men of all parties, they yet for the most part avoid what might seem extremes of theory They stand firmly grounded in the major acceptances of their day. In this way they are best able to keep clear of the

controversies which their authors so much desired to avoid Moreover, the fact that they are expressly devoted to one aspect of the religious life, the private and inward, enables them, as a rule, to keep clear of those bitter controversies of church government and church observance and church discipline which so sorely vexed the public religious life of the day This does not mean that one may not find expressions of opinion, and often very vigorous expressions of opinion on these issues, all the more striking because in the manner of the time they are presented as inescapable first principles. Indeed, even if the author sedulously refrains from controversial assumption or innuendo, one can still as a rule make out what his general position on these questions would be But taken as a group, so far as theology is concerned, they present a fairly solid front of right-minded orthodoxy

It is when we come to penetrate behind that front that the situation loses its apparent simplicity It is not that the seeming solidarity masks any extraordinary discrepancy of belief or feeling There is, of course, a wide gulf between the churchman who is anxious to preserve the austerity of sound Protestantism and the churchman whose spirit is opening to the seductions of other types of beauty than the ascetic beauty of holiness But striking and interesting as such differences are, they are on the whole neither so impressive nor so significant for the student of the spirit of the time as those modifications and attenuations of the rigor of the fundamental theology in the making of which most of these writers are tacitly agreed Often one wonders if they really knew what they were about More often one suspects that enthusiastic rigidity of insistence on the acceptance of the watchword and a disposition to refine away most of its logical edges was the secret of orthodox Anglicanism in the first half of the seventeenth century It is certainly one of the most interesting characteristics of these books

This unconsciously cavalier treatment of logic was more possible with these books than perhaps with most religious books written in a period of corresponding doctrinal stress, because on the whole these books are not metaphysical When one recalls the metaphysical heights to which the devotional writing of a Diony-

sius the Areopagite, an Augustine, or a John Gerson rose, one is struck by the general absence of any approach to metaphysics in these books And this applies not only to their explicit handling of theory but also to the implications on which they rest Where they do trench on metaphysics, it is of a very simple order

The surest test of the intellectual quality of any religious literature is of course the idea of God which inspires it From the ethical point of view, breadth and loftiness and sympathy are probably the most important criteria, but from the metaphysical point of view, it may be questioned if these are enough. It is a little hard to put into words what it is that makes the God of Plotinos or Spinoza or Thomas Aquinas more interesting from the metaphysical point of view than the God of John Bunyan, to choose a noble example of a more elementary conception, and not the abundance of meaner notions with which religious history is so unfortunately supplied But it is not hard to discover what elements are lacking in the God of this literature, and, one wonders, if perhaps in the God of the time In the first place, the Unknown God, of whose inapprehensible nature (from the point of view of human knowledge in this world) all our definitions are but symbols and diagrams, casts no shadow nor light of mystery on these untroubled pages The mystery of God is hardly touched on Nor does the infinite possibility of the essence of God, that concept implied in Catherine of Siena's famous description of her experience of the supreme union, wherein she found herself going on and on without any discernible limit into the wonder and perpetual astonishment of God, play any part in these treatises. Perhaps, this is but another way of saying that the majority of the authors of these books are neither philosophers nor mystics.

One looks in vain, too, in this literature, for the Immanence of God "He was in the World, and the World was made by Him, and the World Knew Him not," said Saint John In general the mystic has taken that sentence without temporal restriction. But it was the second clause which held the seventeenth century imagination As a rule it dwelt little on the first, and where it did, it tended, perhaps because of the prevailing indifference of Protestant opinion of the time to that aspect of God, to drift beyond the bounds of orthodoxy It was one of the issues of the Inner

Light movements, where they were philosophically grounded, and we can hardly wonder that the results did not always commend themselves to the peculiar purposes of the seventeenth century This neglect of the Immanence of God, an aspect of the conception of God thoroughly grounded, of course, in the traditions of orthodox Christianity but nevertheless fraught with disturbing potentialities when it fell into the minds of the enthusiastic, was probably one of the reasons for the astonishing success of the Quaker movement just after our period Certainly, its absence from this literature is striking

Closely connected, no doubt, with this neglect of the Immanance of God is the fact that while all these works are written from the Trinitarian point of view (the Unitarian was in general too much concerned in this period with the problem of survival in a hostile world to write books of devotion), God the Holy Ghost does not figure in this literature at all God the Father, oftener than not the Jehovah of the Old Testament, and God the Son, the Redeemer, are the foundation of these books, but in spite of infrequent references to the "Spirit" God the Holy Ghost is strangely absent One possible explanation is that the devotion to the Holy Ghost had too dubious a history to commend itself to the minds of men who were interested above everything in order But the seventeenth century historian does not as a rule seem to have appreciated the importance of the history of obscure heresies for the understanding of the history of ideas, and where he had access to their living descendants in some of the Inner Light groups of the time, he was far too suspicious of their social implications to be interested in their philosophy Especially may we be sure that men of the type of the authors of these books would not be amenable to influence from such sources except in the direction of violent reaction

In the judgment of the present writer a far likelier explanation is to be found in two circumstances not always given their due weight in discussions of Milton's God The first is the very great preponderance of the Old Testament over the New in the religious thinking of the time The Christian conception of the Holy Ghost is obviously one far more indebted to the Greek influence that went to the making of historic Christianity than to the Jew-

ish It is not difficult to see that to the mind habituated to the metaphysical atmosphere of the Old Testament the conception of the Holy Ghost with its very definitely mystical implications would not be nearly so congenial as the notion of the external, completely differentiated God creating, and ruling, and judging

The second element to be considered in this matter is the fact that on the whole the God of the seventeenth century was very much of a personal God and in a good many ways an anthropomorphic God It is perfectly possible to combine the two conceptions of God the Holy Ghost and God the Father Christianity has usually done so officially, and we have an abundance of evidence in sources in many ways so diverse as Saint Augustine, Bernard of Clairvaux, and John Woolman, of the power and beauty of the operation of such an enriched and widened conception of God in the religious life of the individual But such a conception is probably very difficult for the average mind to manage unless it is sustained in its effort by a strong community religious life in which both elements are kept alive to the heart and the imagination Seventeenth century religion had just emerged from a period of radical segmentation Its strength lay in the intensity with which it apprehended particular aspects, not in the power with which it reconciled diverse aspects of the same truth Here, as so often in the English Church, the sense for life proved stronger than the sense for theory, when it came to the practical emergencies of human existence But in the field of theory the Church, on the whole, clung to the point of view of the time out of which it had just come

It is only natural that in epochs of harassing question and doubt, when the serious-minded man feels himself called upon to make momentous decisions, often decisions involving measures that his whole nature does not happily go along with, that the complexion of his world should darken before his eyes When one is called upon to put forth a good deal of moral energy, and when he has finally brought his whole self to the point where that energy is forthcoming, he is apt to reflect his own strenuousness of spirit in all that he looks upon So with the seventeenth century idea of God He came to the devout mind to wear something of the aspect of the devout man himself In many of these

books one has the feeling of a Deity almost painfully on the moral alert

It was from these circumstances rather than from anything inherently sadistic in the seventeenth century mind that we derive those representations of the nature of God, or rather perhaps of the personality of God, that make so painful an impression on the modern mind Moreover, the men of the time were, as we have seen, too fully occupied with certain practical emergencies of church and society to be able to realize always that God might not to be so heavily involved in the passions of those crises as to see eye to eye with the righteous on earth When Antony Stafford tells the "Vnderstander," for whom he wrote his *Meditations, and Resolutions,* that the story of man's fall through his ambitious hope of knowing good and evil "makes mee call to minde the vaine ambition of those, who seeke to prie into that vnrevealed (and therefore inscrutable) knowledge of the Deity vpon whom GOD looking down, saies in a pitifull derision (as hee did to *Adam*) *Beholde, the men are become as one of vs,*"[1] the modern reader is apt to feel, and not without excuse, that Antony Stafford is making God the stalking-horse of his own sentiments and feelings

God the Father usually appears in the role of the Judge in these books very much as does Jehovah in the Old Testament. And He is a judge armed with all the powers of the physical universe for the execution of his edicts The men of this period believed very thoroughly and completely in the doctrine of eternal punishment, and the instrument they envisaged was a hell quite as specific and unpleasant to contemplate as Dante's Indeed, when the seventeenth century turned its mind to the making of hells, it could do very well, not only with the general physical atmosphere, but even with the furnishing of an appropriate dramatis personae As a rule, however, the authors of these books assumed a general knowledge of the possibilities of hell and a sane desire on the part of their readers to avoid them Some of this is of course due to the fact that the public to whom the books of devotion appealed was in general composed of the decently well-

[1] Anthony Stafford, *Meditations, and Resolutions, Moral, Diuine, Politicall* (London, 1612), pp 1-2

informed and pious The broadside sheets show what the seventeenth century preacher could do when he was engaged in snatching brands from the burning What the devotional books are concerned with is the problem of a higher level of religious society, of those who are in no pressing danger of perishing for want of knowledge or of backsliding from perversity, but who are concerned with the business of making further progress along the road of godliness

Even for these, however, the judgment of God is an ever-present thought, one of the fundamentals never to be lost sight of however far one advance from his first beginnings in the religious life And this judgment of God is no divine, far-off event but an ever immediately impendent possibility For the religious of the time believed not only in the judgment of the world to come but in the immediate, almost daily, judgment of the life here and now God's wrath and vengeance were possibilities to be reckoned with every hour of every day Indeed, the seventeenth century saw the hand of God in the most insignificant happening of the day And while it gratefully acknowledged the gracious providence of God in the many happy chances of ordinary life, it no less piously recognized in the abundant misfortunes of the time the evidences of God's displeasure with the careless and his vengeance on the wicked With such a fundamental view of the matter in an age when the plague was a constant visitor, when fire was far more of a menace in rubbish-cluttered lanes than we can now realize, and the effects of the vicissitudes of the weather were much more direct and much less mitigable by human ingenuity than now, it is not surprising that the sensitive conscience found abundant evidence for its anxiety in the world around it Even if the wrath to come were so familiar a subject of reflection to the enlightened conscience that there was not much need of dwelling on it in the presence of the well-instructed, the wrath of the next moment was so much a matter of course that it could not help intruding on the least provocation This is very well shown in a passage from the *Plaine Mans Path-way to Heauen* that begins innocently enough on that theme dear to the heart of

the earnest in all ages, the current extravagances of fashionable dress:

> ASUNE I pray you sir what say you to these great ruffes which are borne vp with supporters, and rebaters, as it were with post and raile?
> THEOL What should I say, but God bee mercifull vnto vs for such things do drawe downe the wrath and vengeance of God vpon vs all[2]

But this is a point that needs no further laboring, for even those who have never read half a dozen pages of the religious literature of the seventeenth century are familiar with the way in which our forefathers read the wrath of God into affairs in which we should rather discern our own carelessness, and anticipated the vengeance of God in trifles for which we should now deem that ammunition unnecessarily heavy.

What is not always remembered is that such notions are perfectly compatible with a very lively sense of the loving kindness of God. It is a writer of strenuously Puritan sympathies who in *The Groans of the Spirit* draws up a compassionate list of suggestions as to "how a man should hold on in the duty without the sense of the Spirit."[3] And the second of these suggestions is to the following import: "Remember that he, to whom thou goest, is a loving, kind, and compassionate Father, who pitieth his children, and will not suffer them to cry alwayes without an answer."[4] The third, in a way, is even surer of God's goodness to his own: "Thirdly, take encouragement from [the] earnest desire of Gods face that hee hath put into thy heart, which hee never meaneth to frustrate, for hee granteth the desires of his children."[5]

But while God the Judge, and in happier moments God the Father, was the foundation of seventeenth century religion and as such worshipped with awe and fear and homage, the hope and the light and the love of seventeenth century religion centered, as it always has in Christianity, in the person of Christ. But here, as so often, there is a difference. In general, Christ as the pattern of the perfect human life is not so often invoked as in contemporary Christian literature, largely because his role as the Savior of mankind overshadowed every other consideration, but

[2] Dent, *op. cit.*, p. 47.
[3] G. F., *The Groans of the Spirit*, sig. O_4.
[4] *Ibid.*, sig. O_4^v.
[5] *Ibid.*, sig. O_5.

partly at least because in the theology of the time the following of the pattern of a life was much less important than the apprehending of the significance of Christ's sacrifice and the redemption which he had wrought for mankind While the consequences which the opponents of Justification by Faith alone had prophesied were much ameliorated by the ethical teaching of the English Church and by certain interpretations and codicils, as it were, which practical experience attached to the original dispensation, it is pretty certain that the pattern aspect of Christ's life was less insisted on than in the twelfth century or in the twentieth As for the following of the pattern, that involves considerations that are no part of the present study

This concentration on the redemptive aspect of Christ's life in this world inevitably resulted in more attention being paid to his official role than to his personality Indeed, the human aspects of Christ's nature, now the object of the most widespread interest in the modern world, were for the most part neglected That is one reason why continental writing of the time on the life and personality of Christ seems so much livelier, so much richer. A passage like the following is very much the exception in the general run of these treatises on the greatness of Christ's sacrifice for man It is the opening speech of William Cowper's *A Most Comfortable and Christian Dialogue, betweene the Lord, and the Soule* The Lord speaks to the waiting soul.

> O My beloued, why fearest thou, and art so cast down and disquited within thy selfe? dost thou well to be angrie with my chastisements? and why art thou offended, that I should make thee like to my selfe, causing thee to walke in that way of inward & outward griefs which I did tread before thee? why refusest thou to take up my crosse, and follow me, & to taste of that cup which I dranke before thee and for thee?[6]

This was a favorite theme of continental books of devotion, and the spirit of tenderness, personal and in a way human, which breathes through the lines of official theology and dogma in Cowper's dialogue is reminiscent of the spirit of the French treatises of the sixteenth century

Something of the same tenderness breaks through the same circumstances of formal, theologically orientated intercourse in

[6] Cowper, *op cit*, pp 1-2

another of these treatises It is the *Meditations and Praiers* of Sir John Conway, first published about 1570 and republished as late as 1611. It is a tenderer, less austere tradition that speaks in the following passage from "An inwarde speache, wherewith Christe dooth comforte the soule of the Sinner, desiringe to liue better"

> Thou shalte vndoubtedly feele a farre more bewtiful fruite, if thou diligentely care howe to loue, please, and folowe me, then by brosinge thy selfe with scruples of thy confessions, for deeminge to search out, and abolishe doubtes, thou dooste rather engender to thee doubtfuller thinges, thou canst not thinke mee too pitieful, or mercifull, so that thou doe not presume vpon my mercies, neither canst thou geue mee ouer much credite Wherfore accustome thy selfe to thinke wel of mee, and beleue that I wil not condemne thee For truely, who so euer is willing to correcte his Life, and dispaireth not, him wil I saue I am well pleased, O Daughter, that thou arte soary thou haste offended, and that thou wilt not sinne hereafter Now thou arte in state of Saluation, why fearest thou? I am ritche in infinite mercies Thus thinke of me, for thereby thou doost mee more honour, then if thou diddest imagine mee cruel, and harde, or shouldest so mutche feare, as thoughe I watched onely to intrappe man, if this, or that doubte, or circumstance they had omitted But yet when any greate offense cometh to thy minde, confesse thy faulte with al humilitie, and sorrowe of harte, and desire grace to amende, and after reste in peace, and caste al the Diuelishe doubtes vpon mee, I desire thee[7]

That is one of the few speeches attributed to Christ in this literature that one feels he might have made, for it goes with swift compassion to what we have seen was one of the most terrible problems of seventeenth century religion But it is significant that the author of this work expressly acknowledges his indebtedness to other men in the title which he gives to the little treatise from which the foregoing passage is taken "An inwarde speache, wherewith Christe dooth comforte the soule of the Sinner, desiringe to liue better Gathered out of the workes of sundry holy Writers"[8]

This direct way of drawing the inward portraiture of the divine is something that all ages have essayed in some degree, and some of the fruits, as in the above, are beautiful, but there is another way, more indirect, that in its results is at least no less

[7] Sir John Conway, *Meditations and Praiers, gathered out of the Sacred Letters, and Vertuous Writers Disposed in fourme of the Alphabet of the Queene her most excellent Maiesties Name Whereunto are added comfortable Consolations (drawen out of the Latin) to afflicted Mindes* (London [1570]), sigs T_1^v-T_2

[8] *Ibid*, sig R_2

impressive That is the method of the early Italian master, who may be said to have limned his Madonna and Child not so much out of the form and color of this world or the next as out of his own awe and love As we gaze upon his work, we do not so much feel that what is before us is the divine vision as that we ourselves are gazing upon the vision of the divine even as was the painter who has made us share his emotions In things that are matters of infection rather than of communication, like man's dream of divine graciousness, there is much to be said for this method, even where, as in so many of these books, it is intertwined with the inevitable seventeenth century exhortation An interesting example is to be found in *A Heavenly Treatise of the Divine Love of Christ,* a collection of five sermons by John Preston, "Master of Emanuell Colledge in Cambridge, and sometimes Preacher at Lincolnes Inne," which was published twelve years after his death, in 1640. Here we approach the matter not through the loveliness of Christ, but through our love of him; yet one aspect of the theme shines through the other The author begins by asking:

> Doest thou love his [God's] company? Love is seene in nothing more than this Doest thou love his presence, to walke with God? Doest thou observe all his dealings to thee from morning to night, refer all still unto him? Art thou still in dealinge with him? Still thou hast something to doe with him, there is not an houre that passes thee, wherein thou hast not recourse unto him when Christ takes a man unto him selfe, *hee comes and sups with him,* Apocalypse 3 Hast thou then this communion with Christ? Doth hee sup with thee, dwell with thee? Now, communion stands in speaking to another, and in hearing him speake to us When you pray, then pray you formally, as one that is glad when the duty is over? oh if you loved the Lord, you would never be better, than when you are at prayer And you would goe to prayer, as you would goe to speake with your dearest friend [9]

This last passage is not so glowing as the others we have noticed, but it is more typically of this tradition, and it has its own sober charm, partly contemplative, partly hortatory The joy of the religious life is not one of the commonest themes of the devotion of this period, so the lover of mysticism welcomes any glimpse of it The seventeenth century laboured with so many

[9] John Preston, *A Heavenly Treatise of the Divine Love of Christ,* etc (London, 1640), p 22

of the austerities and the terrible ardors of religious experience that it is pleasant to remember that it knew also some of the ecstacies

Especially is it cheering to remember that they who so often made their eyes gaze down into the depths of Hell also on occasion looked upward, and not just to the crown, stiffly glittering, of the faithful servant's reward, but also to the beauty and the glory they were to enjoy forever Robert Bolton in 1625 gives us in a book that has a formidable enough title, *Some Generall Directions for a Comfortable Walking with God,* directions moreover that we are told were first imparted in the Lecture at Kettering, one of the brightest of these visions:

> Let thy soule full often soare aloft upon the wings of faith, vnto the glory of the Empyrean Heauen, where God dwelleth and bathe it selfe beforehand with many a sweete meditation in that euerlasting blisse aboue Oh thinke with thy selfe, (though it farre passe the reach of any mortall thought) what an infinite inexplicable sweetnesse it will be, to looke for euer vpon the glorious Body of Iesus Christ, shining with incomprehensible beautie, and to consider, that euen euery veine of that blessed Bodie bled to bring thee to heauen, and that it being with such excesse of glory hypostatically vnited vnto the second person in the Trinity, hath honoured and aduanced thy nature, in that respect, farre aboue the brightest *Cherub!* To say nothing of the beauty and brightnesse of that euer-blessed Place, that vnapproachable Light, which besets Gods dreadful Throne, the walking arme in arme with the Angels of God, that euerlasting ioyfull communion, and conuersing with thy dearest Christian friends, and all the crowned Saints, and innumerable felicities moe, which infinitely surpasse in excellencie and sweetnesse, the comprehension of the largest heart, and expression of any Angels tongue contemplate principally the Fountaine of all thy blisse, how the mighty Iehovah, God blessed for euer, will powre out of Himselfe, by the influence of Beatificall Vision, as they call it, perpetuall riuers of vnutterable ioyes, and pleasures vpon thy glorified Body and Soule, thorow all eternity, euen as the Sunne powres out his beames and shining euery day afresh vpon the world, without emptinesse or end and with such variety, (for hee is infinite) that they shall bee vnto thee, as fresh, as new, as sweete, as rauishing, millions of yeeres after thou hast dwelt in those Mansions of rest, as they were, the very first moment thou enteredst that blisfull place [10]

Of course there are elements in that description that would not appeal so much to the mind of today as they did to the mind of the age for which it was written There is a certain atmosphere

[10] Robert Bolton, *Some Generall Directions for a Comfortable Walking with God* (London, 1625), pp 64-65

of godliness about parts of it that would be uncongenial to an age that even when religious is not exactly godly The "dearest Christian friends" to the modern man who has usually come to rely on friends that for one reason or another cannot be called Christian suggests too much the well-governed heart so repugnant to our romantic sympathies There is too much theology about it, moreover, for the untheological taste of today Even the reference to the Beatific Vision is a little pedantic But when the modern mind has entered all its objections, which are after all, as so often, slightly irrelevant, there still remains a vision of the glory and the delight of heaven that has real vitality and beauty of feeling in it The unbroken and the unimpeded communion of the blessed, the face to face contemplation of the wonder of God, the unfailing freshness and sweetness of the life of heaven, beyond any touch of time or the weariness of time—these are the noblest elements of man's vision of eternal felicity. And in his apprehension of these essentials there is nothing pedantic or obsolete in the thought or the feeling of the man who wrote these glowing lines It is too easy for us in the involutions of a theological method in which most of us have ceased to take any interest to forget the realities which it strove to express

In dramatic contrast with the glory of God stood to the seventeenth century mind the baseness and the misery of man It was not an inherent, inevitable, ineluctable meanness of station such as the pessimist or the misanthropist has often envisaged out of the disappointment of his dreams It was rather a degeneration from an original perfection, a degeneration due to the arrogance and the wilfulness of the species It is not without significance that the greatest work of imagination that came out of this period should handle this theme of the Fall of Man, for it was central to all religious thinking of the time There are a good many problems in this of the Fall of Man, and Milton was not the first to wrestle with them But they do not concern us here, for these writers accepted what they considered to be incontrovertible fact—most of them seem unaware of any problem in the matter at all—and devoted their efforts to the consequences of the Fall, which seemed to them patent beyond all question

The characteristic note of the Renaissance conception of man's nature is usually agreed to have been struck by Shakespeare in Hamlet's famous speech, beginning "What a piece of work is man!" There is a glow of pride and enthusiasm, an exultation, in that passage, that it is hard to believe did not come straight from the heart of the man who wrote it And we are apt to think of that as the characteristic view of the time But the seventeenth century also took a peculiar satisfaction in contemplating the baseness of man's estate, and this emotion it expressed with no less vividness and power There is even at times a magnificence of self-abasement in its approach to this theme, as in the opening of "A Noone Prayer," in *The Crums of Comfort* "O Lord God, glorious in Maiesty, strong in power, mighty in deliuerance I poore worme, dust and ashes of the earth, present my selfe befor thee"[11]

It is true that the images invoked to express this self-abasement were often of a type which we should call morbid, just as many of the descriptions of death in which the poets of the time delighted seem to us appallingly gruesome But there was nothing hopeless or fundamentally depressing in this low estimate of the human race Rather, the whole conception was permeated by what, if one hesitates to call it a religious hope, certainly may be called a sense of religious challenge This is obvious even in so humanistic a treatment of the problem of the spiritual aspects of the good life as R C's *The Happie Mind,* especially in the first of his divine remedies for a troubled spirit·

> This Sacred Science of Divinity teacheth us, That if we will exalt ourselves wee must first be meeke and humble Let us then deny our selves (like King David) as Wormes and no men, as miserable wretches deserving the miseries of Earth and Hell But let this denyall of our selves make us looke to our Saviour . though wee be in our selves like the *Laodiceans,* poore, blind, wretched and miserable, yet in him wee may and ought to thinke our selves, Rich, free, happie, blessed creatures, little lower then the Angels, *Psal* 8 Partakers of the divine Nature, 1 *Pet* 1 3[12]

Something of the same zest in the contemplation of things hard and the same hope in the midst of discouragement may be discerned in the many passages on contrition in which these treat-

[11] Sparke, *The Crums of Comfort,* sig B_8^v
[12] R. C, *The Happie Mind,* pp 56-57

ises abound Their authors found the problem of living up to their light difficult, as we all do, but they had singular power in recording their failures The Primate of Ireland's suggested confession of sin is perhaps completer than usual, but its energy, its felicity of self-disgust, is in the usual seventeenth century manner There is something remarkably effective in its succeeding crescendoes of eloquence and feeling, and in the fine contrast between the initial self-abasement and the audacity of hope to which it gives way:

> I have oft this day by intemperance, unrighteousnesse, & ungodlinesse in thought, word and deed, forsaken thee my God, notwithstanding thy precept, yea thy help of Grace to observe it, and this I have done for inconsiderable things, so that I am now to be forsaken by thee, to be bereft of thy direction, and defence, and to be left to the disposing of the enemies of my soule and body, yet O Lord, thou hast graciously vouchsafed me power to survey my condition, to examine my sins, whilst yet cureable, and to be dealt withall, afore the Devil's accusation hath drawn down thy vengeance, whilst I am permitted to live, and during this time accepted, this day of salvation, Good Lord perfect what thou hast begun, give me an unfained sorrow for what is past, and an earnest purpose to amend, O let me recover thy good will, that I may rest in thy favour Deare Father! I long to renew that friendship I had with thee, ere these my sins have broken it Thou that hast brought me from my sins, to these desires, bring these desires to perfection, re-unite me to thy selfe, and then ravish my heart so with thy excellencies, that I may never more lust after the pleasures, profits, honours of this world, so as to lose that amity which thou shalt this night vouchsafe me Hear Lord, and answer these my petitions, for Jesus Christ's sake Amen [13]

One of the most paradoxical features of the seventeenth century attitude toward the moral life is the fact that whatever the perils of the theory, in practise the doctrine of Predestination was not suffered to excuse lapses from the moral law. In practise the theory of personal responsibility for personal delinquency was insisted upon with an even passionate strenuousness Nowhere is this clearer than in Sir John Hayward's *The Sanctuarie of a troubled Soule* There is almost an ecstacy of moral responsibility in the following lines

> No, sure I will neuer excuse him, whome his owne conscience condemneth I had thy expresse word and will to stop me, mine owne knowledge to bridle me, I would haue disallowed those things that I did, if any other had done

[13] [James Usher,] *The Daily Examination, and Araignment of Sins, gathered out of the most Reverend the Primate of Ireland's Sermon at Lincolns Inne, Decemb 3, 1648, Proclamations, Declarations, etc 1542-1688* (in the British Museum), No 1

them but my selfe When a mans memory is the bill of his debt, when his thoughts are willing witnesses against him, when his feare is his Gaoler, when his iudgement is his Iudge, when his owne knowledge conuenteth him there is little doubt, either of denying or deceiuing credit, and much lesse of making escape [14]

The mainsprings of the hope that enabled men to look up from so discouraging a picture of themselves to a forgiving God were the promises of salvation to which all seventeenth century religious literature makes such constant reference, those "sweete promises of the Gospell, with the abundant mercy of God, to all that repent, beleeue, and truly turne vnto him," as Arthur Dent puts it in the "Epistle to the Reader" of *The Plaine Mans Pathway to Heauen* [15] And this confidence in the promises of Christ is not only permissory for our comfort and heartening but essential if we are to make our peace with God It is the second of those interesting three necessities which Samuel Hieron laid down in the Advertisement to *A Helpe vnto Deuotion* "There are 3. things chiefely requisite in prayer . . which are helped by this three-fold meditation 1. Humility & lowlinesse of spirit, begotten by the due consideration of Gods Maiestie 2 Confidence and assurance to bee heard, bredde by the knowledge of Gods promises. 3 Feruencie of affection, springing from the apprehension of our own vilenesse "[16] And confidence in the promises of Christ is one of the evidences of the possession of the spirit of prayer which the author of *The Groans of the Spirit* offers for the comfort of the man who is troubled as to whether or not he is praying "in the Spirit":

The eighth particular of the *Spirits* evidence in Prayer, is from that infallible ground, of the faith of the Saints, *viz The Precious promises of God* The same Spirit called the Spirit of supplication, is also called the *Spirit* of Promise, which doth not only signifie to us the residence of the Spirit in the Saints, whereby they are distinguished and discerned from the wicked, but also the assuring of them of those great and precious promises, or things promised on which the Prayers of the Saints make their stand and rise [17]

[14] Sir John Hayward, *The Sanctuarie of a troubled Soule newly enlarged* (London, 1616), Part I, pp 10-11

[15] Dent, *op cit*, sig A_4^v

[16] Hieron, *op cit*, sigs B_2^v-B_3

[17] G F *The Groans of the Spirit*, sigs I_2-I_8^v

The understanding of these promises and full faith in them constitute that "Saving Knowledge" to which reference is so often made in these books. Sometimes this phrase is used for the whole corpus of Christian teaching, but, taken technically and precisely, it refers to the dogmas of salvation. The title-page of one of these books sums up with brevity and explicitness the range of this "Saving Knowledge" when it is understood in the more specialized sense. It is *The True Way of a Christian, to the New Ierusalem,* with the following description:

> Or, a Three-Folde Demonstration. First of the Excellencie of the true and sauing Knowledge of Christ, and the meanes to attain it: with the Antiquitie, necessitie, and benefit of Catechisme. Secondly, of our Vnion and Communion with Christ, and his Church. Thirdly, of our new Creation in Christ, by the blessed Spirit. With diuers Questions, and Cases of Conscience, most comfortable for a Christian.[18]

The root of the matter for the Christian is, then, to know how he is to be saved. The beginning of this process of salvation is to be found, of course, in Election. The general principle of Election, that God out of his mercy chose some to be saved (Christian feeling has on the whole been a little loath to dwell on the corollary, that God chose some to be damned) without their doing anything to deserve it, indeed, ages before they could do anything to deserve it, is too well known to need further explication here. One sentence from a "Houshold Prayer for Private Families in the Morning" in the second part of *The Crums of Comfort* will suggest in its beauty and its exclusiveness both the strength and the weakness of this dogma as a religious idea. "Before the foundations of the world were laid, thou out of thy free love and meer mercy, didst elect us to eternall life, when thou didst reject others."[19]

It says much for the practical sense of the seventeenth century English mind that it labored so hard to modify the implications of the dogmas of Election and Predestination in the interests of moral will. The Catholic adversaries of the early Protestant leaders had not been slow to point out the moral dangers of the theory that a man's eternal fortune had been settled long be-

[18] Immanuel Bourne, *The True Way of a Christian, to the New Ierusalem* (London, 1622).

[19] Sparke, *The Crums of Comfort to Groans of the Spirit, The Second Part,* etc., sig. F_9^v.

fore he was born But the Protestants clung tenaciously to what after all was the best expression of their repudiation of salvation by good works and of their interpretation of the Christian theory of the operation of God's Grace. Free Will became anathema Much of this was, of course, not peculiar in the least to Protestantism The famous dispute between the Jesuits and the Dominicans on the relative parts of the Grace of God and of Man's Free Will in the process of salvation is a case in point But Protestantism was fundamentally committed to what after all had been one of its main standards of revolt Early in the century the Synod of Dort, attended by representatives of the English as well as the Scotch, German, and French, Calvinistic bodies, officially on behalf of orthodox Protestantism branded the doctrine of Free Will as heresy

While, as we have seen, English preachers were condemning the doctrine of Free Will, men of all parties were constantly emphasizing the necessity of man's cooperating to the full extent of all his powers with the working of God's Grace The books of devotion abound with express statements and implicit assumptions of such responsibility It is true that the Reformation theory of knowledge, with its confidence that if a man really knows God's will, he will do it, afforded something of a way out. But the English mind was characteristically more prone to seize upon the results of such an epistemological device than to follow out its logical subtleties

In this field George, Lord Bishop of Derry, makes a very interesting distinction in *The Christian Arte of Thriuing* "No man," he says, "can be assured of his iustification, who is not in some measure sanctified For God hath sworne, that whom he redeemeth, to them he will giue grace to worship *him in holines and righteousnes* And as the righteousnesse of sanctification is an vnseparable companion of iustification, in so much as no man is to be counted righteous, but he *that doth righteousnesse* so is it a necessary forerunner of glorification "[20]

In this insistence that the saved must do something to ensure his salvation these writers betray something of the English love of justice, of desert, and deserving The great majority of the

[20] Downame, *The Christian Arte of Thriuing* (London, 1620), pp 12-13

Church of England leaders in the seventeenth century would have thoroughly agreed with Giles Fletcher that "euery Creature which would bee preserued in his Calling by the blessing of God, must labour for it [21] God will haue his children (though neuer so religious and rich) vse the meanes, as wel as others to obtaine his blessings [22] God neuer bestowes vpon any the rest of glory, that takes no paines to make it sure to himselfe by the meanes of Grace"[23] In other words, in spite of the fact that according to the theory of the time the elect cannot be lost, they cannot be saved without making some effort of their own It is something like that cooperation with the Grace of God on which Saint Augustine lays so much stress in his *Confessions* With the tendency of the seventeenth century to intellectualism this acceptance by the will of its responsibilities was defined in terms of knowledge, but that happy immunity of the seventeenth century Englishman to the more cramping consistencies of logic gave this official embracement of knowledge an ethical and spiritual import which in the Anglican and Puritan alike made it a genuinely spiritual and religious force The author of *The Groans of the Spirit* does not hesitate to use the word *Conversion* for it, as when in discussing how men who do not possess the spirit of prayer may succeed in compassing it, he explains "All men have it not, not the elect till they be converted, although most think that every man in the face of the Church can pray"[24] Arthur Dent even goes so far as to use the favorite term of German mysticism, *Rebirth,* for this awakening of the elect.

> THEOL You must know this, that as there is a naturall birth of the whole man so there is also a spirituall birth of the whole man
>
> PHILA How is that?
>
> THEOL When as the naturall faculties of the soule, as reason, vnderstanding, will, and affections, and the members of the bodie also, are so sanctified, purged, and rectified by grace, that we vnderstand, will, and desire, that which is good
>
> PHILA Cannot a man will and desire that which is good, before he be borne againe?
>
> THEOL No more then a dead man can desire the good things of this life [25]

[21] Giles Fletcher, *The Reward of the Faithful,* etc (London, 1623), p 130

[22] *Ibid*, p 227

[23] *Ibid*, p 247

[24] G F, *The Groans of the Spirit,* sig O₇ᵛ

[25] Dent, *op cit*, pp 13-14

If the initial connection between knowledge of the promises and consequent action implied in the above be accepted, then there is nothing surprising in the conclusion In general the seventeenth century Church accepted this theory and all its implications, and the conclusion resulting from just that orderly concatenation of arguments that so much appealed to the order-loving mind of the time was eminently acceptable to its taste As a rule the seventeenth century was not fond of mystery, in the realm of its religious ideas at any rate But at the other end of the theory there were certain complications in its consequences that the strong ethical common sense of the time had to reckon with That the elect before conversion would not do the good they should was logical and satisfactory. The strong seventeenth century sense of sin both in oneself and in other people would protect orthodoxy against any undue challenge at that point, but that very same sense of sin would drive home the obvious objection at the other end of the theory, for even if the elect could not do the good he should until he had been converted, it was obvious both to the generally accepted view of the frailty of human nature and to the inevitable experience of the world that the elect after his conversion did sometimes at least do the bad he should not This was a knotty point, one on which the most enthusiastic proponents of Election, the Puritans, exercised much of that ingenuity of discrimination and explanation so characteristic of the time For instance, the five authors of *A Garden of Spirituall Flowers*, first published some time before 1609 and republished in a corrected and enlarged form in 1632, devoted a good deal of thought to the question Their conclusion, one suspects from theory rather than from practise, was that "the godly man never giveth full consent to sinne," and for proof they offered the three following "tokens"

> First, before hee comes to doe the sinne, he hath no purpose or desire to doe it, but his purpose and desire is to doe the will of God, contrary to that sinne Secondly, in the act or doing of the sinne, his heart riseth against it, yet by the force of temptation, and by the mighty violence of the flesh, hee is exhaled on, and pulled to do wickednesse Thirdly, after hee hath sinned, hee is sore displeased with himselfe for it and truly repenteth [26]

[26] *A Garden of Spirituall Flowers, Planted by Ri[chard] Ro[gers], Will[iam] Per[kins], Ri[chard] Green[ham], M[athew] M[ead], and Geo[rge] Web[be], Corrected and inlarged,* Part I (London, 1632), p 212

But the greatest difficulty of the seventeenth century theory of Election was like most of the really serious difficulties of the religious spirit not fundamentally a matter of logic at all. It was rather a matter of state of mind For men to accept an hypothesis in religion, as in a great many other fields of life, is not a hard thing, but to be immediately sure of it, to feel its truth through and through in untroubled assurance, is a very different matter On the whole organized religion has not been too exacting on this latter point, and for that it has repeatedly suffered the charge of formalism Most reform movements, whether the Inner Light movement of the late sixteenth century or the Methodist movement of the eighteenth, have tried to shift the centre of religion from the first to the second. It is a standing temptation to the religious spirit, especially to the mystic, to do this, and so long as this appeal to intuition is left unforced within the framework of more matter-of-fact religious acceptance, it is one of the perennially refreshing services of reform But when the effort is made to set up this immediacy of awareness and assurance as the foundation and the test of orthodoxy, then we usually find that a very heavy strain is put upon the sensitive and critical spirit of less simple and glowing fervor, a strain that in certain cases may become profoundly tragic The story of Bunyan's *Grace Abounding* is the story of such a strain, with the happy outcome always possible to the religious genius but by no means inevitably assured to the less ardent and the less unified spiritual nature.

Just as the individual intuitions of the Inner Light movement constituted one of the major problems of seventeenth century authority, so the presumption or the desperation of the logically minded devotee of the Inner Light constitutes one of the major problems of the inner life of seventeenth century religion The definition of a lively faith which John Boughton formulated in his "catechistical treatise," *God and Man,* gives a very brief but thoroughly inclusive statement of the demand which seventeenth century orthodoxy made in this respect To the question, "What is a liuely faith?" the author answers

It is the gift of God, wrought in his appointed time, by the holy Ghost, in the hearts of his Elect, by the preaching of the Word ordinarily, whereby they are made to know and vnderstand the doctrine of saluation by Christ and

his merits, to assent to it for truth, and to make peculiar application thereof vnto themselves, being perswaded that Christ and all his merits, belong vnto their owne persons in particular, so as whatsoeuer hee hath done or suffered, for the saluation of any he hath done, and suffered the same for their saluation, and that for the same, their sinnes are forgiuen them, they are accounted righteous before God, and shall eternally bee saued as well as any other [27]

This insistence upon the personal awareness of salvation naturally bore very hard upon those who could not muster the necessary conviction of being saved Inevitably, the sensitive and the earnest among the unconvinced came to suffer what the unidentified author of *The Embassador between Heauen and Earth* once called "that dangerous and deadly sinne of Desperation,"[28] for the seventeenth century regarded such deficiency of faith not as something pathetic but as a sign of complete spiritual failure The stories which the unsympathetic Papist neighbors spread about the misery and despair of the end of Mistress Brettergh and the pains which ministers of eminence in the locality took to deny such slander show how seriously the sin of desperation was regarded by the godly of the time For public opinion held with Sir John Conway that "whosoeuer refusinge the hope of Pardon, runneth headlonge into the goulfe of Desperation dothe not onely distruste the omnipotencie of God, (perswadinge him selfe that there is some crime, whiche he is not able to extinguishe) but also maketh him a lier"[29]

The burden of despair, doubled by the conviction that that very despair was a sign of God's disfavor, must have weighed crushingly on many a poor soul but for the saving grace of the practical sense of the Englishman With all his deep insight into the inner life, with all his taste for the more inward life of the spirit, the seventeenth century Englishman was still an Englishman with all the distrust of his race for the intangibles of the mood against the solid weight of an outwardly ascertainable fact The result is that the common sense of the community opinion came to the rescue, setting the presumptions of behavior over against the vacillations of mood Phineas Fletcher put this very

[27] B[oughton], *op cit*, pp 78-79

[28] W C, *The Embassador between Heauen and Earth, betweene God and Man* (London, 1613), sig A_8

[29] Conway, *op cit*, sig U_4

well in his *Joy in Tribulation* when he said that "even in the depth of tentation when our selves (judging by sense) suppose that all is lost, standers by (as they say) see further then wee, and can easily discerne this Spirit mightily working in us, grieving under the load of sinne, and unutterably groaning under this oppression, judging our selves, sighing for grace."[30]

Even more radically did Arthur Dent transmute this despair, making it in itself the evidence of salvation, as Theologus put it to the grieving Asunetus. "You do now feele your self to be a sinner, you are greeued for your sinnes, you are weary of them Therefore Iesus Christ is for you al the benefites of his passion belong to you"[31] It is hard to discern any inexorable logic in this salve for a tender conscience, but the impulse that prompted it is humane, and that is more than can always be said for the illogicalities of religious thinking Moreover, as is always true in the religious life of the time, the significance of any mood or state of mind depends upon the general state of the man to whom the mood belongs As Robert Burton says in "Despair's Definition" in *The Anatomy of Melancholy*

> *When I speak of despair,* saith *Zanchius I speak not of every kind, but of that alone which concerns God It is opposite to hope, and a most pernicious sin, wherewith the Devil seeks to entrap men* Some divide it into final and temporal, final is incurable, which befalleth Reprobates, temporal is a rejection of hope and comfort for a time, which may befall the best of God's children, and it commonly proceeds *from weakness of Faith,* as in *David,* when he was oppressed, he cried out, *O Lord, thou hast forsaken me,* but this for a time This ebbs and flows with hope and fear, it is a grievous sin howsoever[32]

With such a strain at the heart of the inward life of religion it is in no way surprising that the view the godly took of this life should not be a light or a joyous one, but here again the facts follow no straight path of logical predestination Something of the perpetual paradox of seventeenth century life, perhaps of all life, is to be discerned here

To begin with, these books do afford an abundance of that picturesque disesteem of life which we have usually come to associate with this period The unknown W C opened his *The*

[30] Phineas Fletcher, *op cit*, pp 318-319

[31] Dent, *op cit*, p 412

[32] Robert Burton, *The Anatomy of Melancholy*, ed A R Shilleto (London, 1927), III, 451

Embassador between Heauen and Earth, betweene God and Man, with "A Treatise of the vanity of all earthly pleasures, and the misery of our life, such as they are to enioy them"[33] And one feels in that something of the classic appropriateness of that which begins at the beginning of all things and grounds its argument on the fundamentals But it is not just a matter of logic with the men of this time. Sometimes this first premise is carried to the heights of poetry, as in that speech which Arthur Dent puts into the mouth of his Theologus

The worlde is a sea of glasse a pageant of fond delight, a Theatre of vanitie, a labyrinth of error, a gulfe of griefe, a stie of filthinesse, a vale of misery, a spectacle of woe, a riuer of tears, a stage of deceit, a cage full of Owles, a denne of Scorpions, a wildernesse of Wolues, a cabbin of Beares, a whirlewind of passions, a fained Comedie, a delectable phrenzie where is false delight, assured griefe certaine sorrow, vncertain pleasure lasting woe, fickle wealth long heauinesse, short ioy [34]

Nothing could show better than this passage the power of the idea not alone over the mind but over the imagination of the time It is a real source of energy

The gusto with which the pious of the seventeenth century contemplated the horrors of human life is parallelled only by the cheerfulness with which they looked forward to swift-coming death True, here as in so many things the godly of the time were exacting To the modern man they seem hard to please, stupidly unaware of how amazingly much the world was to their liking He sometimes unregenerately wishes he could show some of these Jeremiahs what a really godless age can be like But Joseph Henshaw could not suspect this when he asked early in his *Horae Succisivae, or Spare-Houres of Meditations,* "This life is but a journey unto death, and every day we are some spannes neerer the grave, how is it that wee which are so neere our death, are so farre from thinking of it?"[35] Henshaw put the question nobly, but it was left to the authors of *A Garden of Spirituall Flowers* to take adequate measures to supply the deficiency These took the form of "A godly Meditation to bee had in mind, at

[33] W C, *The Embassador between Heauen and Earth,* sig A_7

[34] Dent, *op cit*, p 97

[35] Joseph Henshaw, *Horae Succisivae, or Spare-Houres of Meditations* (2nd ed, London, 1631), pp 20-21

our going to Bed", a work, the tenor of which may be discerned from the following verses

> Beware, let not the sluggish sleepe,
> close up thy waking eye,
> Vntill such time with judgement deepe
> thy daily deeds thou try
> * * * * * * *
> The frisking Flea resembleth well,
> the crawling Worme to me
> Which in the grave with me shal dwel,
> where I no light shall see
>
> The nightly Bell which I heare toule
> when I am laid in Bed,
> Declares that bell which for my soule,
> shall sound when I am dead
> * * * * * * *
> My Bed is like my grave so cold
> my sleepe which shut[s] mine eye,
> Resembleth death clothes which mee fold,
> declares the mould so dry
> * * * * * * *
> I goe to bed as to my Grave,
> God knowes when I shall wake
> But Lord, I trust thou wilt me save,
> and eke to mercy take *Amen* [36]

But this aspect of seventeenth century thought and feeling has been so much insisted on by practically everybody who has ever written on this subject that it seems hardly necessary to labor the point any further Rather does it seem wise to insist on another aspect of seventeenth century thought, which has been too much overlooked in the pleasure which a succeeding time takes in the contemplation of those weaknesses of its predecessors which it has ceased to find a temptation

Indeed, there is a strong element of what we are accustomed to consider distinctly modern present-worldliness in some of the most characteristic of these treatises Nobody could challenge the orthodoxy of *The Christian Arte of Thriving* of George, Lord Bishop of Derry, yet this is the work in which he explains that

> God hath not commanded vs first to seeke his kingdome, and the life to come, that we should want the necessary helps of this life but that having

[36] Ri[chard] Ro[gers], *A Garden of Spirituall Flowers*, pp 305-306

sought that first, wee might more fully enioy these, with the fauour and blessing of God As if hee should say (saith *Chrysostome*) I forbid you to seeke these things, not that you may not receiue them, but that you may receiue them more abundantly [37]

In other words, there is nothing Manichaean in the point of view of the majority of these writers Especially is this shown in their attitude to the world of nature Of God's truth Giles Fletcher says with a customary reservation on the human side "The wisest of the heathen, and all creatures are good witnesses "[38] This attitude toward the creatures (literally the things created) is typical of the seventeenth century point of view It is found throughout the sermons of John Donne, for instance Thomas Taylor in his *Meditations, from the Creatures* very briefly and eloquently sums up the prevailing point of view of this literature.

We haue seene by the former discourse, that no man wanteth Preachers to helpe him towards GOD Euery Creature may be a Preacher to him, in whom the Spirit first inwardly preacheth and wee may take notice how barren and fruitlesse our minds are, and how frothy our speeches by our owne defect God is not wanting to vs, neither in his Word, nor in his workes neither in the Scriptures, nor in the Creatures, but is still teaching, counselling, admonishing, and iustly condemning those that in both remaine vntaught Wee will conclude the Treatise with the words of *Iob*, Behold, these are a part of his waies, but how little a portion heare we of him? and who can vnderstand his manfull power?[39]

But there is nothing in this either of nineteenth century naturalism or of nineteenth century nature mysticism The authors of these passages would have understood neither Emerson nor Wordsworth, though the present writer suspects that a pretty fair case might be made out for including them in the spiritual ancestry of both Rather, they are more akin to Saint Augustine, who makes the creatures send their susceptible pupil back to the God who made them both It is Giles Fletcher to whom we turn again for the classic word on this aspect of the witness of the creatures He is careful to guard against any such conclu-

[37] Downame, *The Christian Arte of Thriuing*, p 37
[38] Giles Fletcher, *op cit*, p 303
[39] Thomas Taylor, *op cit*, p 104

sions as Emerson was to draw two centuries later, when he qualifies his praise of their witness thus.

> But these Sermons which the Creatures preach out of the great booke of Gods workes, though they haue wide mouthes, and lowd voyces, and *Stentorian* like will be h[e]ard through the whole Host of heauen, yet they can but shew vs the out-side of Gods Temple, and bring vs to the Porch dore, here they meet with their *Hercules* pillars, the great veile of heauen, through which our Sauiour is entred into the Holy of Holies, keepes them out They bring God to vs, but they cannot bring vs to God, they tell vs the true God is to be worshipped but how to worship him truly they cannot tell [40]

It is pleasant, too, to note that on this subject the perpetual schoolmastering of the seventeenth century relaxed into the more genial and ample mood of wonder As Joseph Hall says, "He can neuer wonder enough at Gods workemanship, that knowes not the frame of the world for he can neuer els conceive of the hugeness, & strange proportion of the creatures "[41] In that one breathes already the freshening wind of that curiosity which was to bring in the great scientific achievements of the period to follow

In Hall this wonder at the variety and the magnitude of God's creation is given a mystical tinge by that interpenetration of joy upon which he lays so much stress There is the voice of half the world's mystics in a sentence like the following "I will enioy all things in GOD, and GOD in all things, nothing in it selfe· So shall my ioyes neither chaunge nor perish "[42]

The expression of the above owes its charm to the personal accent, but there is nothing peculiar in the idea itself The unknown author of that appropriately styled *A short and pretie Treatise touching the perpetuall Reioyce of the godly, euen in this lyfe* goes so far as to make this joy in the beauty of the world one of the marks of the true Christian When one recalls the austerity of most of the marks popularly attributed to the Christian of this period, it is pleasant to remember this more genial pattern Seldom has finer justice been done to the beauty of God's handiwork, or a surer confidence been expressed in his appreciation of his children's response to the good things with

[40] Giles Fletcher, *op cit*, pp 313-314

[41] Hall, *Meditations and Vowes A third Century*, No 56, p 109

[42] Hall, *The Second Booke of Meditations and Vowes*, etc, No 41, p 163

which he has provided them. This treatise shows that beside God the Judge the sixteenth century could also remember God the Artist, though it would have deemed the epithet blasphemous. The core of the work is in the following passage:

> The right and true Christians doe take incredible delectation especially among other men, at this wonderfull ornature and beautie of the worlde, at the varietie, grace and order of heauenlye bodies, at the most pleasant sight of yᵉ sunne, at the starres shining by night, and the amiablenesse of the earth, and the most faire, & as it were, springing countenaunce of naturall things. I meane, so often as they doe see, as the Poet sayth:
>
> The skie to shine, the trees to budde,
> The chearing vines to spring
> With braunches, & the boughes to bend
> With full Grapes that they bring.
>
> The standing cornes to yelde their fruits
> Ech thing to florish out
> The Welles to bubble, and with grasse
> the medowes clad throughout.[43]

This is certainly not the best-known voice of the piety of the time, but it is one of the clearest and sweetest, and it should not be forgotten. It does much to make more credible the perpetual miracle of the religious poetry of Vaughan and Crashaw.

Of all the problems of man's life in this world, so variously defined and so diversely esteemed in these books, one more than any other deserves our attention. The problem of knowledge is one of the enduring problems of human existence. And from the point of view of religion and the religious life it is one of the most central. This is true in any age. But in an age of transition like this, the problem of knowledge assumes an even greater importance, especially when the first exhilaration of disintegration is over, and the long hard work of making the new age has begun. Because such an effort at reconstruction inevitably requires some selection and in so far some limitation of the chaos of disintegration, the leaders of reconstruction are driven to defend their choices against those who are opposed to all choice or to the particular choice that has been made. Consequently, they must make some fundamental inquiry into the basis of their choice. And

[43] *A short and prettie Treatise touching the perpetuall Reioyce of the godly, euen in this lyfe*, printed with Hake's translation of *The Imitation of Christ* (London, 1568), sig. C_2.

that always necessitates some attention to the questions of whether we can know at all, and what justification we have for believing that what we think we know, is true

In spite of the havoc that the Renaissance and the two Reformations had wrought on the social and religious and imaginative structures of the Middle Ages, there is much to suggest that some of the most fundamental intellectual and philosophic positions of the Middle Ages endured well into the seventeenth century, often disguised by the new form of expression but essentially unchanged in their essence The seventeenth century Protestant held very different views from Thomas Aquinas as to the relative positions of Scripture and tradition in the transmission of revelation, but he usually did not think of questioning either the possibility or the fact of man's knowledge of the universe in which he lived On the whole the Renaissance with its glorification of man's powers had done nothing to destroy this confidence in the possibility of man's attaining to knowledge of the universe

Indeed, the often arrogant self-assurance of the Renaissance and its preoccupation with the tangibilities of the world of passion and sense had made some heavy inroads on the sense of mystery that plays so large a part in mediaeval feeling At the same time the rejection of the anthropomorphic legends and visions by which the Middle Ages had sought to people the vast spaces of mystery with human sympathy and human company had restored to those vast obscurities something of the terror of their primeval desolation. Perhaps these two factors cancelled each other. But there is still a third to be reckoned with, and that is the fact that the seventeenth century was in many ways an era of concentration as well as expansion, a time of consolidation as well as revolution Nowhere was this truer than in the Church of England, where, as we have seen, substantial groups were setting their faces against what seemed to them experiment run wild and endeavoring to build up some stability and unity of institutional life

Naturally, such men were concerned with imposing some limitations to the fantasies of the human mind In that sense they invoked the mystery of life But their invocation of the mystery of life was limited and cautious That sense of the mystery of life, of the unknown country and the thoughts beyond the reaches

of our souls, that is so striking in Shakespeare's tragedies was too much of a solvent of dogma and creed to be cultivated by the pious in an age of confusion that was struggling for order It is a curious thing that the mystery of life is the hunting ground of both the sceptic and the mystic, the excuse of unfaith, the opportunity of faith. As in most ages, the majority of the seventeenth century fell between the two That robust faith that launches with humility and confidence on the sea of the unknown is probably the fruit of a serener, more integrated, more matter-of-fact religious life than that out of which the seventeenth century had come The result is that we shall as a rule look in vain for the wonder and the beauty of mystery in these pages

What we find here is rather a rebuke to the arrogance of the Renaissance man with his faith in his capacity to find out and to know everything in heaven and earth Joseph Hall speaks for many of his contemporaries in the third of his first century of *Meditations and Vowes Diuine and Morall* "As there is a foolish wisedome so there is a wise ignorance, in not prying into Gods Arke, not inquiring into things not reuealed I would fain know all that I need, and al that I may · I leaue Gods secrets to himselfe It is happy for me, that God makes me of his Court though not of his Counsell"[44] There is the center of seventeenth century moderation of curiosity. It is not in the least Greek, rather it is that acceptance of one's appointed degree which is so conspicuous a feature of mediaeval religion.

As for the instrument of that wise and proper knowledge, we may note roughly two dominant conceptions The first is reason "Reason," says the R C who published *The Happie Mind* in 1640, "is of such force as that it can passe from things known to things vnknowne It can abstract from visible things, things invisible, from Corporeall Incorporeall, Generals from particulars, High and mysticall from plaine and triviall things"[45] In pellet form, that is the mediaeval conception of reason and its role in the obtaining of religious certainty. Reason is by no means the only way of obtaining religious certainty for the mediaeval theologian, but it is the fundamental way Even the intuition

[44] Hall, *Meditations and Vowes* *The first Booke*, No 3, pp 3-4

[45] R C, *The Happie Mind*, p 178

which transcends all reason transcends, not supersedes, reason Revelation itself is amenable to reason for interpretation and for conclusion But in general not much is said about reason in this literature, probably because it is not primarily concerned with such speculations

The second answer to the question is one heard more often in nineteenth century discussion than in mediaeval It is Hall who puts the matter succinctly in his *Second Book of Meditations* "The Schoole of God, and Nature, require two contrary manners of proceeding In the Schoole of Nature, we must conceiue, and then beleeue, in the the Schoole of God, wee must first beleeue, and then we shall conceiue Hee, that beleeues no more than hee conceiues, can neuer bee a Christian, nor hee a Philosopher, that assents without reason"[46] In other words, the dualism of faith and reason is clearly established This answer to the problem of knowledge is the more common, and, as one might suspect from that fact, hardly a matter of epistemology at all For faith is conceived of by these men in a very loose and empirical sense It is, as we have seen in John Boughton's definition of a "liuely faith," a matter of immediate personal apprehension of certain generally accepted beliefs and their consequences for the individual[47] A believer is therefore not one who goes through a certain intellectual process, but one who accepts certain religious dogmas with something of the confidence and immediacy that we have come to think of as characteristic of conversion

It was this insistence upon inward liveliness of conviction that brought the attack upon institutional religion to the Inner Light We have already seen the extremes to which this tendency went in some of the Enthusiastic groups like the Family of Love, but in spite of the fact that Churchman and Independent alike repudiated with horror and indignation the excesses of their position, there is no question that some of the tendencies of the Inner Light movement were present in the Church of England, and that to no inconsiderable degree. The seventeenth century emphasis on the necessity of right-mindedness, that is, certain orthodox acceptances, made the orthodox sometimes curiously im-

[46] Hall, *The Second Booke of Meditations and Vowes*, etc, No 15, p 139
[47] B[oughton], *op cit*, pp 78-79

pervious to suspicion of those who had made the proper professions Particularly was this true of the Puritans, for the very exigencies of their position drove them to a certain sympathy with individualism, particularly if it were joined with a hatred of ritualism and a taste for uncommon strictness of living.

Of this as of many Puritan tendencies in the Church of England, Dent gives us perhaps the best example It is Theologus himself who lays down the fundamental position that "we must fetch the warrant of our saluation from within our selues, euen from the worke of God within vs"[48] And a little later in the dialogue he proceeds to defend this position against the sceptical challenge of a modest interlocutor·

> ANTILE How can plaine and simple men trie the spirits and doctrines of the Preachers?
>
> THEOL Yes For the Apostle saith *The spirituall man discerneth all things* 1 *Cor* 2 15 And S John saith to the holy Christians· *You haue receiued an oyntment from that holy one, and knowe all things* That is, all things necessary to saluation 1 *Iob* 2 20 Those therefore which haue the spirit of God, can iudge and discerne of doctrines, whether they be of God or no[49]

That is the essence of the Inner Light position, although since the author is still within the fold of orthodoxy, he naturally restricts the activities of the Inner Light to his own religious position

But even if the disciplinary aspect of the matter might be thus disposed of, or at least the religious leader hope that it would be thus disposed of, still the problem of the inner life remained To the solution of this the author of *The Groans of the Spirit* addresses a large part of his treatise. The main lines of his solution we may gather from the heads of his discussion of the question of "How a man may know when he prayeth in the Spirit.

> 1 The first evidence of the *Spirit* of *Prayer* is our *Adoption* or *Sonship*, wherein we are interrested
>
> 2 A second note that one *prayeth* by the *Spirit*, is an earnest desire and endeavour to take the *Spirit* along with them
>
> 3 The third evidence that we pray by the *Spirit* is a sensibility of our own inability

[48] Dent, *op cit*, p 266
[49] *Ibid*, p 298

4 The fourth evidence of the guidance of the *Spirit*, is a sensible helping of us in some measure against the aforesaid infirmities of Understanding, Will, Memory, and Affections

5 The fifth evidence of Prayer made by the *Spirit*, is that spirituall vigor or fervency of it, which as a consuming fire from heaven, causeth the odours of the prayers of the saints to ascend like incense

6 The sixt evidence of the *Spirit* of *Prayer*, is that godly train of all saving graces garding it, strengthning it, and attending upon it

7 The seventh evidence of *Prayer* made by the *Spirit*, is the guidance of the *Spirit* in all other actions For as he that is born of the *Spirit*, is *Spirit*, so hee is *spirituall* in all his parts, faculties, and actions, because the *Spirit* is of an all-renuing nature, though many remainders of the flesh, and much reluctation be intermixed therewith thorowout all the parts, faculties, and actions

8 The eighth particular of the *Spirits* evidence in Prayer, is from that infallible ground, of the faith of the Saints, *viz* *The precious promises of God*

9 The ninth Evidence of the *Spirit* of *Prayer*, is the directing of *Prayer* to God in the name of Christ

10 The tenth evidence that a man prayeth by the *Spirit*, is the betaking of himself to it in the time of trouble, as to a rock of defence, or the making of it his especial remedy in the time of misery

11 Another Evidence of the *Spirit* in *Prayer*, is due respect had to the *Matter* and *Order* of Prayer

12 The last note of Evidence of the *Spirit*, is the looking for an answer from him to whom wee pray The end of every action, is first in intention[50]

Dry as this analysis often seems, and forced as are some of its details, it is nevertheless a very interesting indication of the way in which the seventeenth century, and that by no means at its most conservative point, took hold of the problem of criteria for the inner life One of the most impressive developments of the time is what we may call this growth of interest in the subjective, but hand in hand with it goes a very evident effort to relate inner experience to some ascertainable outer experience It is a problem with which the mediaeval mind had wrestled in the field of mysticism, a problem which the modern mind is more or less still concerned with in the various proposals of contemporary humanism The seventeenth century had had an abundance of experience of the vagaries that result when the human mind is turned loose to follow the weathercock of its own whimsies. It

[50] G. F, *The Groans of the Spirit*, sigs E[illegible]-M[illegible]

was therefore forced to inject into that logically closed circle some check of outside judgment and control The result was that it came face to face with the question of jesting Pilate

The orthodox answer was simple—the Word of God But as the Catholic controversialists had early pointed out, and as the multiplication of sects within the Protestant fold had brought forcibly home to the lovers of order even before the end of the sixteenth century, the word of God in itself brought up problems of truth not to be so easily dismissed. The result is that question which Giles Fletcher posed in *The Reward of the Faithful* and tried there to answer: "How wee should infallibly finde out the true Word of God, which may leade vs to the knowledge of him, our selues, and our supreame happinesse"[51] It was not an easy question to answer.

The orthodox answer is implied in that authenticating description which John Boughton added to the title of his *God and Man* "A Treatise Catechisticall Collected out of the sacred Scriptures, and the most Orthodoxe and best approued Diuines ancient and moderne, for the good of such as desire to be made wise to saluation" In itself it tacitly recognizes the insufficiency of unguided reliance on Scripture It also illustrates the homage which logic in English hands is always forced to pay to experience It says in another way what the divine of the *Plaine Man's Pathway to Heauen* says in ratification of a conclusion which one of his hearers draws from his words "All experience doth teach it, and the scriptures do plentifully auouch it"[52]

Liberty of interpretation of the Scripture, which had proved one of the most effective weapons of the first Reformers and one of the most persistent boomerangs of their successors, was still a matter of conscience, but in practise it meant liberty of correct interpretation of the Scripture In a moment of rare candor Antony Stafford put it very well "All opinions are not to be told, but onely such, as either learned men, or else the Church of God haue held before vs"[53]

And in an age when the religious life was strenuously cultivated and enforced on a pretty wide front of human activity,

[51] Giles Fletcher, *op cit*, p 320
[52] Dent, *op cit*, p 244
[53] Stafford, *op cit*, p 57

the problem was obviously not one of opinion and talk alone It involved for the orthodox all those thousands and one possibilities of what the time so appropriately named and so much dreaded, "singularity" Thomas Cooper in *The Sacred Mysterie of the Gouernment of the Thoughts* puts in picturesquely controversial terms what was of constant concern to all the established parties of the time:

> But especially be we carefull in the practise of Godlinesse, neither to affect singularitie, and fall to separation neither to presume aboue our callings in arrogating what belongs to the Magistrate or Minister, for these haue bene occasions of blasphemous Thoughts and errors, euen to question the Truth of the Church The maine grounds of Religion and so from Brownisme to fall to Anabaptisme, and so to Arrianisme, and so to Atheisme [54]

. Professing as all these authors did, almost without exception, to eschew the controversies of the time, it is not surprising that on the whole they have very little to say on the subject of the Church as a metaphysical entity. For that was a point beset with all the difficulties of the time. But the seventeenth century could on occasion rise above that troubled battle-ground to the untroubled hills of the reality beyond the conflict of the moment And when these men did so rise, they had a singular gift for leaving their wonted preoccupations behind them So the unknown author of *A short and pretie Treatise touching the perpetuall Reioyce of the godly* wrote of a vision larger than that with which his godly usually busied themselves·

> And now how great gladnesse doe they at large enioye, whiles they set before their eyes the holy, catholyke, Apostolike, right beleeuing, true Christian Church or congregation? whiles they remember that communion or fellowship of Saintes, which beeing euen from the verie beginning of the worlde after the promise giuen touching the Messias or Sauiour to come, doth continue on still euen to this day spred first abroade in the fathers and Prophetes, afterwardes in the Apostles and Martyrs, then by diuers degrees and orders of Christians, professing all one fayth, displayed throughoute the whole world?[55]

In that church of vision and aspiration all parties could hopefully worship and look to a happier life beyond the problems of their time.

[54] Thomas Cooper, *The Sacred Mysterie of the Gouernment of the Thoughts*, etc (London, 1619), pp 154-155

[55] *A short and pretie Treatise touching the perpetuall Reioyce of the godly*, sig B_5^v

CHAPTER X

THE ENGLISH BOOKS OF DEVOTION—TEMPER AND STYLE

If it has been difficult to arrive at some clear notion of the varying points of view represented in these books, it will be, I fear, still more difficult to give any adequate idea of the temper, the spirit, the emotional approach of this literature. Yet in view of the theme of these books some consideration of this matter, some appreciation of their achievement in this respect, is quite as important and in some ways even more interesting

One of the most striking aspects of this temper or spirit, one which perhaps first of all impresses the reader and never quite relaxes its hold on his attention, is a certain practical strenuousness, a constant and unremitting earnestness The reader soon finds that this is no accident of temper or manner but the very heart of the matter, the logical consequence of the basic philosophy of the group The foundation of it is a literal belief in the constant and immediate direction of all human affairs by the hand of God There is nothing surprising in the fact that men of such enterprise and conviction as the men of the seventeenth century should believe that God was with them in their undertakings It is one of the mainsprings of their energy Far more telling is the fact that tempers so stirring and so assured should take counsel of patience and content from this confidence in God's direction In that they demonstrated to a singular degree their allegiance to their profession Giles Fletcher spoke for the time when on that ancient puzzle, "Why the godly are many times poore, & how the wicked are often rich in this world,"[1] he offered the following assurance "Rest therefore thy selfe content with that estate God hath set thee in, that is best for thee, if thou beest a childe of God, and it is not Gods order to giue thee his blessings

[1] Giles Fletcher, *op cit*, p 198

to hurt thee with "[2] It is Dante's ancient answer, and the answer of sages still more ancient But it comes with a certain aptness to the moment from the seventeenth century pen

As has been said before, there is very little that is mystical in most of these books, but on this theme one is occasionally reminded of the practise of the presence of God It is no merely Sabbath homage to the guiding hand of Providence but an all-pervasive sense of God's presence in each moment and in every event that gives its peculiar intensity to a passage which we have already looked at in one of John Preston's eloquent sermons on the love of God. "Doest thou love his company? Love is seene in nothing more than this Doest thou love his presense, to walke with God? Doest thou observe all his dealings to thee from morning to night, refer all still unto him? Art thou still in dealings with him? Still thou hast something to doe with him; there is not an houre that passes thee, wherein thou hast not recourse unto him· when Christ takes a man unto himselfe, *hee comes and sups with him,* Apocalypse 3 Hast thou then this communion with Christ? Doth hee sup with thee, dwell with thee? Now, communion stands in speaking to another, and in hearing him speake to us. When you pray, then pray you formally, as one that is glad when the duty is over? oh if you loved the Lord, you would never be better, than when you are at prayer And you would goe to prayer, as you would goe to speake with your dearest friend "[3]

So beautiful is the foregoing passage that it is hard to understand how the author could have thought of any necessity of compulsion, but the note of exhortation, of plucking the brand from the burning, is not absent even from the above And in other passages, even in the same book, it is the dominant motive. His first sermon on the general subject of the love of God he opens by proposing baldly the thesis *"That to love the Lord Jesus, is so necessarily required of us, that hee is worthy to be accursed that doth it not,"*[4] and then in the best debating manner of the

[2] *Ibid*, p 212
[3] Preston, *op cit*, p 22
[4] *Ibid*, p 3

time, he proceeds to give the "reasons why they are worthy to be cursed that love not the Lord Iesus"[5]

This sense of the constant presence of God gave to everyday life an urgency and a consequence unknown to the natural promptings of easy-going humanity Especially does it seem to have begotten a greater respect for time and perhaps in that more than in any other one thing laid the foundations of the world in which we live One suspects that if Robert Bolton could have foreseen the rush of contemporary America, he might have hesitated to give the following as one of his *Directions for a Comfortable Walking with God* "Wee must bee countable for time At the dreadfull Barre of that last Tribunall, as we must bee exactly answerable euen for wandring vaine imaginations, idle words, and euery the very least errour of our whole life so must we also giue up a strict account for the expence of euery moment of time"[6] The industry of the seventeenth century pious is almost proverbial, especially as it carried over into the Puritan faith in sheer keeping busy and horror of all idleness But at its best it did not lose sight of the more purely spiritual values The authors of *A Garden of Spirituall Flowers* give abundant evidence of Puritan leanings Nor is it difficult to see what position they would take in the Armageddon that in 1632 was drawing so close Yet they are a little warier of excess of industry than was Bolton, not so naive in their assumption that an honest calling is the best way of serving God "After Prayer ended, betake thy selfe to thine ordinary Calling and Vocation, or do that whereunto thy ordinary busines calleth thee, and see that thy family doe the like remember that thou must give account for thy time idely spent, and yet in thy labour take heede that thou doe not minde thine owne profit in such wise as that thou coole any grace thereby, or quench holy affections in thee"[7]

On the whole, the first half of the seventeenth century witnessed a pretty steady development of psychological self-awareness, of a disposition to inquire more closely than ever before into the life within At the same time, that lively sense of the potency of outside forces for the motivation and direction of the inner life,

[5] *Ibid*, p 11 ff
[6] Bolton, *op cit*, pp 165-166
[7] Ri[chard] Ro[gers], *A Garden of Spirituall Flowers*, p 103

that had been so strong in the Middle Ages continued almost unabated The result was that sense of the almost catastrophic hazard of the moral life that occasionally leaps from the tacit anxiety of the godly into direct expression Such an exposure of what must have been by no means a rare state of mind is to be found in Bolton again, in a passage with the beginning of which at least the modern reader is very much disposed to sympathize

> Me thinks worldly wisdome should rather wonder that any one is wonne vnto God, then cry out, and complaine, Is it possible there should be so few? Sith all the powers of darkenesse, and euery diuell in hell oppose might and maine the plantation of grace in any soule sith there are moe snares vpon earth, to keepe vs still in the inuisible chaines of darkenesse and sinne, then there are starres in heauen, sith euery inch, euery little artery of our bodies, if it could, would swell with hellish venome to the bignes of the greatest *Goliah*, the mightiest Giant, that it might make resistance to the sanctifying worke of the holy Ghost sith our soules naturally would rather die, and put off their immortality and euerlasting being, then put on the Lord Iesus In a word, sith the new creation of a man is holden a greater worke of wonder, then the creation of the world [8]

From the modern point of view such a strenuousness of daily living would almost inevitably involve strain, a strain that in certain temperaments might do grave damage And the modern mind would find evidence of such strain in the attitude which the godly took toward the ungodly, a strain which did not relax with the growing difficulties of the end of our period Probably a phrase such as the following is not to be laid at the door of the religious life of the period so much as at the door of unregenerate human nature in all ages It is John Preston's praise of Saint Paul as "a man so abounding in the love of the Lord, as hee is zealous against such as love him not"[9] After all, animus against the opposition is usually interpreted as the mark of a good party man But one is a little surprised to find a morning prayer like the following from the second part of *The Crums of Comfort*, beginning nobly "O Lord, glorious God, Everlasting Father, who art the *Alpha* and *Omega*, the first and the last who was before time, in time, and art after all Time, Eternall of Eternities, Incomprehensible, Invisible, Immutable, Immortal, all Glorious,

[8] Bolton, *op cit*, p 4
[9] Preston, *op cit*, p 1

without End, and before beginning,"[10] and ending up as follows "Wee beseech thee, remember the groaning griefs of all thy Churches, in all parts Root out, O dig up, destroy, and root out all that be not planted by thy hand, all Quakers, Shakers, Ranters, and Seekers, such as look not after thy Laws, or that live not according to thine Ordinances, but according to their own lust, and wickednesse of theire wills"[11] That combination of the eternal and the topical, of the Unknown God of the mystic and of the sectarian problems of church government is typical of one aspect of the religious life of the time It is easy for the modern mind to be shocked at that discrepancy or to be contemptuous of the mentality behind it, but it must not be forgotten that even such unfortunate consequences as this arose from one of the noblest aspects of seventeenth century religious thought, the effort to orientate the practical interests of every day life in the light of eternal Truth

At the same time there can be no question that the strain of this strenuous application of the spirit to the task of salvation was relieved by the practical terms in which it was conceived "It is onely the practical part of Religion will make a man blessed,"[12] said Thomas Watson, Minister of Stephens Walbrook In spite of the Protestants' objection to reliance on good works and their consequent rejection of a large number of the works of piety that had been popular in the Middle Ages, fasting and alms-giving were still retained, and as many proclamations of public fasts and countless records of public benefactions of the time attest, widely practised as evidences of piety and tributes of devotion As such they are instanced and duly commended in *The Crums of Comfort,* for example But still more important is the fact that the daily work of the world is taken over by the Christian life. "An honest Calling, is a Schoole of Christianity," said Robert Bolton[13] And it is a school in which attendance is compulsory The seventeenth century had a very high opinion of the privileges and immunities of rank and power, but in this field the minister did not hesitate to take a much more independent line than the

[10] Sparke, *The Crums of Comfort to Groans of the Spirit, The Second Part,* etc , sig B_{9}

[11] *Ibid* , sigs B_{10}-$B_{10}{}^{v}$

[12] Thomas Watson, *The Saints Delight,* etc (London, 1657), p 273

[13] Bolton, *op cit* , p 49

customs of society at the time would in general have countenanced Arthur Dent puts the usual point of view of that time, and perhaps others as well, into the mouth of one of his simple men in *The Plaine Mans Path-way to Heauen,* whom he makes ask "But may it not be allowed vnto Lordes, [and Ladies,] Gentlemen, and Gentlewomen, and other great ones, to liue idlely, sith they haue wherewith to maintaine it?" And he does not scruple to sweep away all the social landmarks of his time when he makes his Theologus answer:

God doeth allowe none to liue Idlely but all both great and small, are to be imployed one way or another either for the benefite of the Churche, or Common-wealth or for the good gouernment of their owne housholds or for the good of Townes and Parishes, and those amongst whome they doo conuerse or for the succour and reliefe of the poore or for the furtherance of the Gospell, and the maintenance of the Ministery or for one good vse or an other [14]

This practical attitude of the godly toward the affairs of the world did much to counteract the professed other-worldliness which was an undoubted element in seventeenth century Christianity, but which has on the whole probably been over-emphasized by the worldly of succeeding generations Certainly, there was nothing squeamish about the spirit in which these men offered up their daily work to the Lord, nor do they seem ever to have been embarrassed about asking the help of heaven for the prosperity of their affairs There is a "Morning Prayer for Munday" in *The Crums of Comfort* that offers an interesting contrast to the modern attitude on this subject

Grant we may deale uprightly, & let the carriage of our Affairs be (O Lord) so pleasing vnto thee, that they may draw downe thy blessings upon vs, and keep vs we pray this Weeke following, thriuing in our estates, and religious in our carriage, alwaies meditating of good for thy glory, for the Church and Commonwealths good, so that whatsoeuer we lay our hands vnto, thou wilt bend our harts to the same, so it be to thy praise and glory [15]

And with this confidence in the respectability of asking heaven's aid went a disposition to scrutinize the behavior of the godly in those practical affairs which they were commending to

[14] Dent, *op cit*, pp 191-192

[15] Sparke, *The Crums of Comfort,* sig D_8-D_8^v

heaven We are accustomed to think of the sociological sermon as distinctly a modern invention, but it is hard to do so after the following definition of an "inward Atheist" by William Vaughan "He swaloweth vp aduowsons, hospitals, and other mens goods vnder pretence of simplicity He raiseth rents, incloseth commons, and enhaunceth the price of corne. With his wooll or wealth hee vseth to snarle & deceyue honest-minded men, whom at length hee notwithstanding hauing Scripture in his mouth snatcheth at most greedily, & clappeth in irons . ."[16]

But even more striking than the sociological sermon as evidence of the practical way in which these writers of devotion conceived of the religious life, is what we may call the first book of psychiatry in the English language, at least the first with which the present writer is acquainted It is *The Happie Mind,* already noticed in an earlier chapter, which R C published in 1640 with the following engaging description on the title-page "A Compendious *Direction,* to obtaine the same Shewing it's sundry *Passions* by an Interview of the foure *Complections,* being A Treatise stored with *Divine, Morall,* with *Phylosophicall,* and *Physicall,* observations, Tending to the rectifying our *naturall* Infirmities" Early in the discussion of this theme, the modest author who concealed himself under the initials R C, lays down the fundamental principle that "it is apparent, the body workes upon the Mind, and the excessive distempered humours thereof, doe also annoy and distemper the Mind, But how? Not by depriving it of any power or faculty given it of God (as some say) which remaines without diminishing, but by corrupting the next instrument whereby the mind worketh, and consequently the action it selfe, which commeth to passe by reason that the evill humours of the body, do send up grosse and maligne fumes into the braine, annoying the animall Spirits, which are most thinne and subtill vapours proceeding from the bloud, and the Instruments whereby the mind worketh and performeth the actions thereof"[17] And this definition of general principle R C follows up with elaborate directions for diet, exercise, and all the details of the daily regimen

Yet occasionally, in spite of this practical approach to the problems of the religious life, these books do lapse into grave

[16] Vaughan, *op cit*, sig C_3^v
[17] R C, *The Happie Mind,* pp 31-32

pedantry Usually such lapses occur when the relations of faith and knowledge are under discussion To take a very striking example, the speech which William Cowper, "Minister of God's Word," put into the mouth of the more important participant in *A Most Comfortable and Christian Dialogue, betweene the Lord, and the Soule,* viewed from any angle but that of the seventeenth century's passion for ensuring the right attitude, would be a libel of rather blasphemous proportions The soul has just brought to the Lord the most heart-rending of all the problems of the sensitive and aspiring spirit, failure of faith, of all problems the one on which Infinity might be expected to deal most pitifully with finitude, and this is the answer which Cowper's Lord returns

> As for the weaknesse of thy faith, which I see is the ground of all thy trouble, it proceedeth either from the want of knowledge, or else from the lack of application It is indeede a special benefit to haue the minde inlightened with true light Seeke therefore my light to shine vnto thee by continuall prayer and searching of the Scriptures, that thou be not trobled with the errour of conscience, as if it were a iust accusation [18]

Sometimes this passion for making sure that everybody is correctly informed is extended to include the Lord himself The *Crums of Comfort,* that treasury of good things from the point of view of both the regenerate and the unregenerate, contains "A Heauenly Meditation" which the object of it must have found singularly illuminating Lack of space and the fear that in some fields even the most rigid forbearance may prove exhausting forbid more than a very limited citation, but that is enough for the general effect of the passage It begins properly enough. "O Lord, my God (and most gracious Father) in Iesus Christ, I wretched sinner, heere prostrate before thy Throne of grace, doe euen out of the deepe affliction of my wretched heart, look vpon thee . . "[19] But presently it has struck its informatory stride· "It is manifest & plaine (O Lord) that *Papists* depend more upon Pharisaicall working, then upon Christian beleeuing; and it is as true, that the loose *Libereine* [Libertine] careth little, either for faith, or fruits, and both these are flat enemies against the Crosse of thy deare Sonne, our alone Sauiour Christ Iesus . . "[20] And

[18] Cowper, *op cit*, pp 43-44
[19] Sparke, *The Crums of Comfort,* sig H,
[20] *Ibid*, sig H.

this reminder is followed by what, let us hope, was a satisfactory assurance "Farre bee it from mee (deare Father) to bee ensnared by either of these"[21]

The men of the seventeenth century were fierce partisans, partisans such as only they can be who, like the author of the foregoing meditation, are sure that they have God on their side And when, as is true of so many of these men, they took their stand for moderation, they took it with the same fierce partisanship with which they did everything else Enthusiasm was the great problem of the church in the first half of the seventeenth century. As we have seen, it was the contemporary version of the eternally resurgent problem of liberty and the bounds thereof It was also, from the point of view of the more conservative part of the Church of England, and all indications point to the conclusion that this was at least passively the majority of the nation, the problem which all reformers and revolutionaries must sooner or later face, of knowing where to stop The conservative held that they knew where to stop, that the Church of England had reached that point, and that all who wished to pass beyond that point were in the gravest sense of the term disturbers of the peace, with the ruin of Church and State as the probable penalty of their fanaticism. On the other hand, the Puritans and still more the Independents held that the work of reform was as yet unaccomplished, that the Church of England was still in the bonds of the old order, and that salvation, spiritual and political, depended on the completion of the work of the Reformation And they countered their opponents' charges of fanaticism with charges of laziness and corruption and spiritual deadness, designed to touch the spirit of so stirring an age at a very raw point

We have had some experience in the foregoing pages of the liveliness with which the conservative expressed their disapproval of the Enthusiastic groups and of the energy of vituperation with which that feeling could on occasion be expressed But it would be a mistake to assume that such feelings were in any way a monopoly of the more conservative As we have already seen, they were shared with quite as much energy of conviction and often even more vivacity of expression by the Puritans and the

[21] *Ibid.*, sig H_7^v

Independents The G F who composed *The Groans of the Spirit* had suffered under Laud to the point of dying in prison, and Sparke himself was proud to remember that he, too, had suffered as one of "such as would not bow to his [Laud's] Baal."[22] *The Crums of Comfort* itself affords plenty of evidence for the suspicions which we know its publisher encountered from ecclesiastical authority But it is Sparke who writes, and it is in the preface to the second part of *The Crums of Comfort* that he writes the following arraignment of the Enthusiastic·

> In this new Age, *Raunters, Quakers, Shakers, Seekers,* etc, with their Raptures, Visions, and Revelations will be the only *Saints Cop* with his fiery-*flying Roll, Fry,* the new *Jesus Christ,* at or neer *Andover,* with the flying Woman at Newberry, these and such like finde out new wayes to heaven, but this *Manuell* and Tract, is not composed for them, neither will it bee of use to them, for *This,* and the *Groans* of the *Spirit,* are for no such *Spirits,* but for the *poor penitent, lamenting, repenting,* and *mourning sinner,* whose *groans* cannot expresse the grief of his *heart,* and they be for him whose *practise* it is so to *live,* as when hee is to *die,* hee hath nothing else to do, but to *die*[23]

It is part of the inevitable comedy of the age that any of those referred to, with the proper unique excision, would cheerfully and whole-heartedly have signed the above statement.

But while even the most extreme indignantly repudiated any insinuation that they could be the proper objects of the obloquy which all joined in heaping on Enthusiasm, nevertheless this fear of Enthusiasm made all look to themselves and to their brethren in their particular brand of the faith (and the seventeenth century preeminently recognized the duty of being one's brother's keeper) with a wariness of going to extremes which their passionate certainty of being in the right would never have of itself engendered The romantic view that caution and moderation spring from tepidity of temperament can look for no support from the seventeenth century For then it was consciousness of the fires of passion smouldering under the thin pall of decorum that made men strengthen all the reserves of self-control they could muster This is one reason why the romantic amateur of the intensities of human nature is likely to be a little disappointed

[22] Sparke, *The Crums of Comfort to Groans of the Spirit, The Second Part,* sig ¶$_7$

[23] *Ibid*, sigs ¶$_8$-¶$_9$^{v}

in much of the literature of this period Excess of passion was too present a danger to tempt men to artistic exploitation

Moreover, it must not be forgotten that no amount of external excitement can break the light-hearted immunities of the careless and the scoffing Not all the seventeenth century by any means lined up for prelacy or presbytery There is much in the aspect of this time to justify the cynical view of human history that it is the party that talks loudest that gives an age its character for posterity A complete study of the religious life of the seventeenth century would include at least a passing glance at the ungodly. They certainly weighed heavily enough on the consciousness of the pious Such a scrutiny would reveal not only the vast gulf of indifference and neutrality that lay between the conflicting sides and the equally vast penumbra of lukewarmness and procrastination that lay around them but also not a little of gay and light-hearted and in a sense deliberate cynicism and mocking According to Lewis Bayly there were those who sang hymns for fun, interspersing their hymn-singing with profane ballads [24] And it is pleasant to know that the grave looks of the godly sometimes met with humor, blasphemous no doubt from their angle, but probably in the long run salutary The speech of Antilegon, "a Caviller," to the newly-awakened conscience of Asunetus, "an Ignorant man," at the end of *The Plaine Mans Path-way to Heauen* does not read like a preacher's invention:

> Tush, tush Now I see you are in a melancholicke humour If you wil goe home with me, I can giue you a speedy remedy for I haue many pleasant and merrie bookes, which if you should heare them read, would soone remedy you of this melancholy I haue the Court of Venus, the Pallace of pleasure, Beuis of Southampton, Ellen of Rummin the mery Iest of the Friar and the Boy The pleasant story of Clem of the Clough, Adam Bell, and William of Cloudesly [,] The odde tale of William, Richard, and Homfrey [,] The pretie Conceit of Iohn Splinters last Will, and Testament which al are excellent and singular bookes against hart-quames and to remooue such dumpishnesse, as I see you are now fallen into [25]

What more could the modern advocate of the normal suggest?

Whether, then, because of its own sober awareness of its particular temptations or because of the corrective indifference or

[24] Bayly, *op cit*, pp 364-365
[25] Dent, *op cit*, p 408

mocking of the ungodly, there was a very wholesome fear of extremes in the hearts of the thoughtful of this period We see this fear in some of the many exhortations to discretion to be found in the devotional books Joseph Hall, by no means lacking in his own enthusiasms even if he was to become a bishop, goes so far as to say "An in-discreete good action, is little better then a discreet mischiefe "[26] And still more do we find this anxiety in the numerous warnings of these books against singularity, that peculiar bête noir of an age of concentration and devotion to the ideals of unity and order

The very vocabulary of much of this literature betrays the same caution Of course, every allowance must be made for the inevitable differences which three hundred years have wrought in the connotations of words, but even when these allowances have been made, there is left a distinction of emotional flavor that cannot be disregarded Certain words occur again and again *Sober* is one of them When the Primate of Ireland drew up his directions for the examination of conscience, he used three adjectives as tests for all thoughts, words, and actions They were *sober, just, godly* [27] *Comfortable,* not of course in its present suggestion of ease and relaxation, but in the sense of giving comfort and assurance, is another *Christian* in a sense that implies very little more than right-minded is still another So is *sweet,* and *profitable* These words are found again and again in the titles and through the pages of these books The description of Abraham Fleming's *A Guide to Godlinesse,* one of the essays of *The Diamond of Deuotion,* contains several of them "*A Christian treatise, and no lesse sweet and comfortable,* than necessarie *and profitable to be read, both for* common and priuate vse "[28] These are all perfectly good words, expressive enough, but there is nothing very exciting in their aura of suggestion There is more than a little flavor in them of that strain of stoicism that plays so considerable a part in the secular thinking of the time

But much as this aspect of seventeenth century religious feeling must be insisted upon, it must never be forgotten that it is

[26] Hall, *Meditations and Vowes* *The first Booke,* No 31, pp 37-38

[27] [Usher,] *op cit*

[28] Abraham Fleming, *The Diamond of Deuotion Cut and squared into six seuerall points* (London, 1602), p 81

not the whole story As many of the passages quoted in preceding pages demonstrate, there is no lack of warmth of passion in these pages However much it might counsel itself moderation and avoidance of extremes, the seventeenth century could not always hold down the lid on its feelings When theme or occasion made violence commendable, as in the censure of the wicked and in the arraignment of the wrong-minded, it took its opportunities nobly So, chary as it was of any expression of intimate personal feeling, and the seventeenth century was a very unsentimental age, at least in its religious reactions, it could now and then break into a tenderness that one would hardly suspect from its usual temper and style We have seen the depths of pedantry and ill-placed exhortation into which William Cowper could fall in his *A Most Comfortable and Christian Dialogue, betweene the Lord, and the Soule,* but to leave our view of his work with that would be most unfair A sentence like the following, reminiscent as it is of a passage in the great Communion prayer of Saint Thomas Aquinas, suggests another side of the matter, no less significant "Though the time be not yet come wherein I shal appeare in thy presence and see thee, yet Lord, let me haue in this land of my Pilgrimage those glances of thy sweet and louing countenance that may sustaine me."[29]

Sometimes, this tenderness and delight may rise to an even loftier emotional height, but on the whole such examples are better reserved for the consideration of these books from the stylistic side One example will suffice here, though it must be noted that it comes from a period later than that of Jacobean austerity It is the meditation on the Nativity to be found in Philip Traherne's *The Soul's Communion with her Savior*

O Thou *Light of the World,* who wast born in the Night, an Emblem of that dark and disconsolat Estate wherinto We by Transgression fell Thou art *the Sun of Righteousness,* by whose Rising upon the Earth *the Peepl that walked in Darkness hav seen a great light, and upon them that dwell in the Land of the Shadow of Death hath the Light shined* Thy glorious Appearing hath dispersed the Cloud of thy Father's Wrath, under which the whol Creation groaned, together with those unwholsom Mists of Sin, Error, and Ignorance wherin Mankind was lost and benighted Thou hast dissolved the Everlasting Chains of Darkness which were justly prepared to bind us in Hell and Despair,

[29] Cowper, *op cit*, p 70

and once more restored us a Day of Hope to rejoice in the Light of thy Countenance for ever[30]

But even more important for that sense of vitality which one feels in all these books are two elements that, while not in the least matters of temper, yet have profounder consequences for the distinctive temper of this literature than almost anything which we have so far considered. The first of these is the striking impression of seriousness made by all these books This does not mean merely that their authors have written in dead earnest That may be taken for granted from what everybody knows of the general spirit of the time Rather this literature deserves the name of "serious" because it represents quite evidently the whole-hearted and full-bodied effort of the men who wrote it Without exception, one feels when he reads a book from this group that it represents the best thinking and the best writing of which the author was capable Pious these books are from start to finish, but one never feels, as he sometimes does with nineteenth century devotional books, that edification is offered as a substitute for thinking. True, much of the thinking in these books is along lines which no longer have any power to stimulate the interest of most of us Many of the specific ideas and attitudes are for most readers of today definitely out-worn In spite of that it is clear that for its own age it was neither shoddy nor superficial thinking That alone gives these books a dignity and an enduring substance that no amount of mere timeliness can ever insure.

At the same time, one has a sense that these men were thoroughly conversant with their world, in most cases well abreast of their time. Of course, one looks in vain for that effort to be in the current of the latest fashion of thought and feeling that one so often finds in contemporary treatises, but the world was not moving so fast then, and men whose chief business was with what seemed the enduring realities of life felt no compulsion to hurry to catch up with its novelties Yet for all this self-contained reserve there is nothing academic or cloistered about these books. They are rich in all kinds of casual and incidental information about their world because they are so centrally and richly grounded in the life of their time For the historian, the sociologist, the

[30] Traheron, *op cit*, pp 36-37

economist, as well as for the student of the religious life and feeling of man, they are treasuries of vivid and instructive data. But what is more important for the student of religious literature, they have the poise, the easy substance and assurance, of work moving in the main stream of its time.

To the modern reader there may perhaps be something repellent in the assurance of these men. They do not speak of hypotheses, they speak for the most part of established, of unchallenged realities. True, they often call to those who turn a deaf ear to wisdom when she cries out in the street. The indifferent, the shallow, the reckless, the unawakened are no monopoly of the age of scepticism. But in the first part of the seventeenth century however irksome the pious might find the indifferent, they suffered no loss of confidence at their hands. When they felt called upon to do battle with their inertia, they did so with unimpaired energy and faith in the unassailable integrity of their own cause. They not only knew that they were right, but they knew that their world recognized that they were right. It is easy for the modern mind to feel superior to the dogmatism that made such confidence possible. But however impossible the descendant of these men may find the grounds of their certainty, he might well covet some of the happier fruits of it.

For dry as their method often is and rigid as are the limits of their theological assumptions, the fact that they are in the main current of their age, that they are intellectually and emotionally free of their world, gives their work a certain robustness and a certain breadth for which one often searches in vain in later religious literature. There is a certain vitality in the dustiest of these little books that men who would despise their archaism might envy. For here is no thin diagram of a possibility but the full round of a dominant view of the world. The authors of these books differ from their readers not in measure of acceptance but in degree of sensitiveness and in depth and fullness of realization. Whatever be the ultimate truth concerning the points on which they and we might differ, it is impossible not to feel that these men are farther along the road of the religious life than most of us. For in spite of the distractions of the post-Reformation period and the havoc they had wrought with those finer aspects of re-

ligion that do not thrive on controversy, by the opening of the seventeenth century there was a mature religious tradition for the Church of England writer to work in And whatever the liabilities of the mature tradition for the religious experimentalist, there can be no reasonable doubt that for the life of devotion it is an asset inferior in value only to the first blinding glow of a new revelation.

One of the most impressive consequences of the fact that this literature is so much in the main current of the life of its time is to be found in the quality of its style, viewed purely as style To begin with, there is no need of laboring the point that these books are in the great tradition of seventeenth century prose. Practically without exception, they are written in that straightforward, direct, and incisive prose that is characteristic of the period There is an energy, an austere color, about this prose that is hard to rival in that of any other period, and at the same time a supple firmness of texture that at its very quaintest keeps it fresh and living There is nothing adventitious about it, nothing pretentious, at its most colorful and fantastically magnificent, one feels that it is sound to the bone It will wear as well in the kitchen as in the throne room, in the marketplace as in the cathedral No better proof of its quality is to be found than in the pages of these books, the work as they are, for the most part, not of the great literary genius of the time but of cultivated and earnest gentleman of distinguished but in no way first-rate abilities

Nowhere does one feel the quality of this prose more than in those places where its usual soberness of pace is interrupted by the figurative and the symbolic One type of religious symbolism and imagery we have already encountered in some of the translations and adaptations of continental books of devotion It is a highly detailed and sensuous, often realistic presentment to the imagination of historic episode or vision or even dogmatic symbol, at its best an artistic performance of a high degree of imaginative power and emotional intensity The effort to bring religious truth home not only to the intellect but also to the imagination and the feelings is the mark of this literary type The result is often highly sensational, a sort of literary equivalent for baroque painting and sculpture So for the sake of convenience of allusion in

speaking of imagery and symbolism, we may term it the baroque style

On the whole there is not much of it in these books, and when an unmistakable example does turn up, it is usually found in the company of other elements that suggest a French or Italian origin Seldom does one feel that it is thoroughly acclimated in England Perhaps the best example in this literature is to be found in a prayer of John Hayward's *The Sanctuarie of a troubled Soule* in which the concentration on certain physical aspects of the devotion to Christ and the symbols associated therewith suggests the usual continental book of meditation and devotion rather than the typical English work of the period The very style of apostrophe that characterizes this section of the book prepares the reader for an alien emotional effect:

> "Haile, holy wound of my Sauiours side, the entrance to his hart, the issue of his love Haile, holy riuer of Paradise, the veine of living water, the true treasure of the Church Haile, ô window of the heauenly Ark, whereinto whosoeuer entreth, shall escape the vniuersall inundation of Gods wrath Open vnto me this gate, ô Lord! and receiue me into thy bosome to dwell, euen into the secret closet of thy loue I adore thee, ô my Lord Iesus Christ! the King of glory, the Prince of Peace, the eternall vertue and wisedome of the Father "[31]

On the whole, this type of thing does not seem to have appealed to the English temperament Indeed, we have positive evidence in the fact that translators usually expurgated such passages, even when there could not be the least theological suspicion of the ideas suggested For instance, the 1599 Protestant edition of the *Meditations* of Granada omitted all but an abridged version of the second sentence from the following passage in the 1582 Recusant translation

> Consider now here (o my soule,) the excellencie of the goodnes, and mercie of almightie God, which sheweth it selfe so euidentlye in this misterie Consider, how he that clotheth the heauens with cloudes, and adorneth the feildes with flowers, and bewtie is here spoiled of all his garmentes Consider how the bewtie of the Angells is here defiled how the height of the heavens is here browght lowe how the maiestie and omnipotencie of almightie God is here abased and put euen to open shame, and reproche Beholde, how that roiall bloude distillinge out from his brayne, trickeleth downe all alonge by the heare

[31] Hayward, *op cit*, Part II, pp 328-329

of his head, and by his sacred bearde, insomuche as it watereth, and dyeth the verie grownde vnder him Consider what extreme colde that holie tender bodie of his suffered, standinge as he stode, all rente, and spoyled, not onelie of his garmentes, but also euen of his verie skynne, hauinge withall so manie gappes and wyde holes of open soores, and deepe woundes, throughout all his blessed bodie For if S Peter, notwithstandinge he was both clothed, and shodde, felt colde the night before how farre greater smarte and colde did that most tender bodie of our sauiour abyde, beinge so naked, and full of soore bruses, and woundes as it was?[32]

Such expurgation seems to have been regarded as essential to making a continental book acceptable to the English public

This distaste for baroque imagery does not mean that these books were coolly and entirely literal Far from it They contain whole gardens of verbal flowers from which the sympathetic spirit may cull posies of old-world sweetness, but they are of a different sort Sometimes they are faintly allegorical artificialities, a little reminiscent of Lyly and that whole tribe of not too natural naturalists There is, for instance, the innocent guile of the 1602 edition of Abraham Fleming's *The Diamond of Deuotion* with its descriptive addition "Cut and squared into six seuerall points," and the neat table of its contents

1	The footpath to Felicitie .	1
2	A guide to Godlines	81
3	The Schoole of Skill	181
4	A swarme of Bees	209
5	A plant of pleasure	245
6	A Groue of Graces .	283

A Swarme of Bees carries the additional description: *"With their honie, and* Honicombs *Gathered out of the sweete and* odoriferous garden of *Gods word* "[33]

Usually, however, the allegories suggested by symbols of this sort are not carried beyond the title They suggest the type of appeal to the fancy to be found in some of the treatises of Jean Pierre Camus and others of the "Devout Humanists" of the time in France, but the influence of such devices on this literature is very limited compared with the part they play in the literature of France.

[32] Luis de Granada, *Of Prayer, and Meditation,* trans Richarde Hopkins, fols 99-99v Cf the 1599 London version, p 509

[33] Fleming, *The Diamond of Deuotion,* etc , p 209

There is also something of a moralistic allegory in certain of these books, for instance, in Thomas Adams' *Eirenopolis The Citie of Peace, Surueyed and commended to all Christians* The main gates of the city are defined in a fashion that suggests Bunyan as "Innocence," "Patience," "Beneficence," and "Recompence or satisfaction "[34] Then too, "there is a little Posterne besides, that is *Humilitie* "[35] And perhaps with an unconscious memory of Webster's *Duchess of Malfy,* Adams later adds "Heauen is a high Citie, yet hath but a low Gate "[36] But even allegorizing such as this is rare in this literature Probably the dominating sense of the urgent seriousness of the matter would make any such sugar-coating of the pill seem frivolous dallying in the face of impendent catastrophe

What on the imaginative side gives these books their characteristic flavor is a certain concrete homeliness of statement, in which the most everyday example of a general truth is selected, or in which the abstract or spiritual idea finds its expression in the most commonplace of symbols Sometimes the abstract idea stated with all the sweeping splendor of the most stately diction of the time comes into strange juxta-position with the homely detail Then one has a curious and charming sense of lack of perspective such as one feels in some of the Italian primitives, with that same peculiar intensity and freshness of effect that constitute so much of the charm of those old masters Perhaps it is to this incongruity more than to anything else that we should attribute that quaintness which so much impresses every student of the period

There is something of this intermingling of the lofty and the low in a "Prayer before a Sermon" in *The Crums of Comfort,* where the lofty beginning soon gives way to what in an age of hour-long sermons must have often been a matter of very practical urgency "O Grant most gracious Father, that our thoughts may not be carried away with any vaine illusions or bad imaginations Grant that we be not ouercome with sleepe or drowsines," etc [37] And still more in a characteristic passage of *The Sanctuarie*

[34] Thomas Adams, *Eirenopolis The Citie of Peace, Surueyed and commended to all Christians* (London, 1622), pp 36-78

[35] *Ibid*, pp 78-79

[36] *Ibid*, p 80

[37] Sparke, *The Crums of Comfort,* sig E_5^v

of a troubled Soule of John Hayward "I, I, it is euen I that haue broken couenant with thee I haue been wise to deceiue my selfe, abusing my reason, rather how to doe amisse, then how to amend I haue falsified my faith, I haue riotously runne after the vaine *conceits,* or rather *deceits* of sinne, whose kindest courtesies are the allurements of mischiefe, which like a bemired dogge, defileth with fawning, whose kisses are of power to kill"[38]

But too often the word *charm* is limited in its connotation to the delicate, the quaint, the delightful, the purely pleasing On the contrary, there was an unmistakable edge to this homeliness of the seventeenth century A very good example is to be found in that conclusion which Arthur Dent's Theologus draws toward the end of *The Plaine Mans Path-way to Heauen* "Thus we see it is no dallying with God, but if we sinne, we are as sure to be Ierkt for it, as the coates of our backe Therefore let vs not deceiue our selues, nor make light of sinne, for sinne is no scarre-bugge, and we shall one day finde it so"[39] Indeed, no small part of the charm of the *Plaine Mans Path-way to Heauen* is due to this indigenous simplicity and raciness of speech

Sometimes the picturesque homeliness of an image acquires even greater intensity from the concentration of the epigram. Joseph Henshaw summed up in one sentence a good deal of heart-breaking disappointment in an age when the arrogance of rank might be a serious stop to the energy of the less fortunate: "Great mens Words are like dead mens shoos, hee may goe bare-foot that waits for them"[40] The result is a gain not only in penetration and impressiveness of meaning but also in beauty From this point of view an even finer instance is to be noted in a sentence of Thomas Watson: "Our deportment and carriage is in heauen, wee walk as Burgesses of that city"[41]

It is interesting to see how such homely definiteness of expression can give energy to a whole chapter, can give as it were backbone to a passage that otherwise under the urge of strong emotion might spray out into shapelessness A good example of

[38] Hayward, *op cit*, Part I, p 11

[39] Dent, *op cit*, p 381

[40] Henshaw, *op cit*, p 47

[41] Thomas Watson, *An Appendix to the Former Discourse,* etc, printed with *The Saints Delight,* etc (London, 1657), p 296

the effect of such homeliness may be seen in a passage styled "An exhortation or preseruatiue against the dayly committing of sinne" by John Philips:

> Al men being vnder the curse of the Law, and feeling the gnawing worme of their owne conscience, to vexe and torment them, they seeke to be rid of this hellish slauery . . . to shake off this heauy burthen, and to bee released from the bondage of hell But how? they trust not to their owne strengths, they put no confidence in man, they build not on their owne deserts, they stand not to reason with the Lord, as though they would iustifie themselves But feeling their miserie, they fly vnto the Lord by a liuely faith . . . This is an especiall note for vs to consider, in what manner the Church militant may easily bee decyphered from the Church malignant For as the members of the true Church of Christ, continually trauell vnder the Crosse, and are at warfare, and their fight is endlesse against sinne, death, the flesh, and the powers of hell So, this malignant Church, this Synagogue of the diuell, this proud painted strumpet of Babylon, flourisheth in all wickednesse, loueth this world, preacheth for promotion and pampereth itselfe in fleshly lust most shamlesly . . . the Church maligant, most arrogantly lifteth it selfe vp against the Lord, against his annointed, they resist the Lords army of his Saints, they as the gracelesse members of the diuell, seek to destroy the Lords vineyard to batter down the wals of *Sion*, & to ouerthrow the pillars of the Lords house . . . Let the bestly Epicure forget to make his belly his God let the Vsurer that eateth and deuoureth vp yong Gentlemen, & poor Artificers aliue, learne with *Zacheus* to make restitution of their wrong gotten goods let the whoremonger and adulterer, learne to giue ouer his beastly whoordom let the drunkard forget his vnreasonable quaffing Let greedy Land lords endeauour to forbeare the practise of polling poore tennants, and to conclude, let all in generall, come before the Lord our Maker, with humble and contrite harts let vs weepe and waile for our sins, and then the Lord our God will heale our offences [42]

Seventeenth century prose is almost never dull, but sometimes its very energy and its color give it a repulsiveness that a more characterless medium might escape It is therefore pleasant to remember that under a different impulse the same imaginative resources might and did give beauty of a very high order The prose of Sir Thomas Browne, of John Donne, of Jeremy Taylor has placed the century in which it was written in the forefront of all ages of English prose for richness and beauty There is no need of offering fresh proof of what that age could do But it is worth while selecting one or two passages out of almost countless

[42] John Philips,, *The Perfect Path to Paradise* . . . *Also a Summons to Repentance*, etc (London, 1626), sigs Q_2-Q_5

possibilities to show that the devotional books enjoyed their due share of the heritage of their time

One notable example is to be found in the ending to that "Inwarde speache, wherewith Christe dooth comforte the soule of the Sinner, desiringe to liue better," which is the finest thing in Sir John Conway's *Meditations and Praiers* of 1570 Like all writings of its kind it ends up with death, a subject of alchemic potency for the imagination of the time It is Christ who says:

> Nullum est genus mortis, quod nocere potest iusto No kind of death is able to annoie a iust man for y^e iust with what death so euer he be beset, is in safegard Therefore be nothing carefull whether at home, or abroade, in bedde, or in fielde thou shalt die, neither feare whether thy deathe be naturall, or violent But as the Apostle counselleth, studie to liue soberly, iustly, and godly, that thou maie well and happily die An euill deathe dooth not followe a good and iuste life, but the deathe of the iuste is pretious in my sight, how soeuer they ende this life, whether in the water, in the fire, or in bedde they die [43]

Death was perhaps the favorite theme of seventeenth century piety, but it was not the only theme on which the imagination of the pious could stretch its wings The witness of the creatures was another, and there are many lovely passages on that subject As might be expected, one of the loveliest is Giles Fletcher's:

> Now so diffusiue is God of his goodnesse, and gratiously as it were prodigall of his image, although in it selfe it can be seene in no place, yet he would haue no place, where it should not bee seene in his works, which are all weake shadowes of some bright excellency, that is substantially resplendent in himselfe For as the noone-Sunne, which then makes all things most easily seene, can then least of all bee seene it selfe, and yet lights vp innumerable stars in the night season, wherein, as in so many little sparkles of it selfe, it is visibly, though absent, presented to vs so our vnderstanding in this midnight of things, may see the spirituall sunne of our soule shedding some small starrelight of himselfe in euery one of his litle images his works, whose vnapprocheable light in it selfe whosoeuer should hope to attaine vnto, should certenly neuer attaine vnto his hope
>
> Thus in his workes the wisest of the heathen beheld, and admired, the goodnesse, and glory, & power of God [44]

But perhaps as fine a passage as any in these books is one that owes very little of its charm to ornament or image or indeed to

[43] Conway, *op cit*, sig V_8^r

[44] Giles Fletcher, *op cit*, pp 307-309

anything but the adequacy with which it develops its theme Fittingly, that theme is the force, the use, the necessity of prayer The passage begins nobly with that sweeping view of the matter which the men of this age delighted to take

> Since all the dayes and howers of the life of man, the consumers of the world & the measures of time it selfe are the subiects & succeeders of the Lords owne handes, and by him only lent to thy vse, be not thou then so vnnaturall against the Lord the owner thereof and against thine owne good as not sometimes to lend him some of his owne howers to his seruice for thine owne good To him therefore let vs goe, to him let vs send vp these trusty embassadours our *Prayers, Prayer* the sweet cesterne and conduite of grace, by the which all the benefits and guiftes in that heauenly treasure-house, are continued, reserued and renued vnto vs *Prayer* the keye that opens where no man shuts, and shuttes where no man can open, that enters where no man hath passage, and returns where no man can hinder [45]

With this passage it is fitting that we end our survey of these books For here we bring the circle of our view home to the point at which we started, the main interest and purpose of this literature, the cultivation and the enrichment of the inner life of religion It is one of the most ancient and the most unremitting of man's enterprises, in whatever garb of contemporary dogma or lack of dogma it clothe itself. In these books which we have just been studying we have the most sustained and the most widely current effort in English literature to realize that objective

[45] W C, *The Embassador between Heauen and Earth,* sigs D_8-D_7^v

CHAPTER XI

The Masterpieces

Few things are more enduringly mysterious or fascinating than those differences which mark the first-rate from the second-rate in any field of art They are in appearance so slight that to the catholicity of delight it seems churlish to insist upon their presence, to say nothing of their significance. Yet slight as those differences are, time lays its hands upon them with unerring rigor of discrimination After all, time's remembering, however capacious and unhurried, is limited, there is something fastidious as well as austere in the necessity of economy So when all is said and done, any body of literature has justified its claims upon posterity when out of its several hundred commitments to the flood of time so many as three or four are found still afloat three centuries after the thronged launching of contemporary acclaim In such survivors the less seaworthy are remembered more tenderly and gratefully than any stoutness of their own could warrant.

So of this literature which we have been studying for the most part in the mass Three centuries later we may find some three or four greater works still current where most of those we have been studying are theme for the scholar and not for the reader It would be easy for the specialist to swell this list, even to make good his additions with more than show of argument Dent's *Plaine Man's Path-way to Heauen* deserves far more attention than it has received as an item in the early reading of Bunyan The anonymous *A short and pretie Treatise touching the perpetuall Reioyce of the godly* is a beautiful thing that should not have been forgotten. For even the great bulk of this literature substantial claims upon esteem, if not always delight, can be made And for one writer out of the main stream something more can be asked Augustine Baker, if he had written in the full tide of the main movement of the life of his people, would have been, al-

ways of course on that none too safe supposition that under those altered circumstances he would have still been what he was, a great figure But he belongs to a movement out of the main current of English literature, so literary history has but kept his name For the others, in most cases history has not done even that, and for the special student history is probably a safer guide to determination of eminence than those subtler preferences, those more occult affections, that are bred of years of concentrated application

Of this literature history has on one count or another preserved four names, Lancelot Andrewes, John Donne, Richard Baxter, and Jeremy Taylor In the case of the first it is unquestionably more for the sake of devotion than of literature that he is remembered today. Moreover, his devotional masterpiece, *The Private Devotions,* comes into English literature only by translation Within those limitations he has claims, as will appear in a few minutes, to very high regard, a regard of a kind that probably will not decline with further passage of time, for *The Private Devotions* is of its kind and range of devotion a classic Richard Baxter's *The Saints' Everlasting Rest* has historically a much greater claim to remembrance, for it is a book that in past times has enjoyed an almost unrivalled popularity and esteem among men of all classes and all parties within the English Church. And while there is no evidence that it now holds anything like its ancient place and influence in the religious reading of even the descendants of Baxter's followers, its author is today receiving more rather than less attention from students interested in the history of religious institutions and positions and from the by no means declining number of scholars who are interested in religious psychology, especially as exemplified in the autobiographical remains of personalities of extraordinary gift and charm As the masterpiece of such a writer, *The Saint's Everlasting Rest* has peculiar claims to attention, quite apart from the impression it makes on the modern mind as either devotion or literature

The *Devotions upon Emergent Occasions* of John Donne and the *Holy Living and Holy Dying* of Jeremy Taylor are in a very different class Like *The Private Devotions* and *The Saint's Everlasting Rest* they are the works of divines of great eminence in

their own day and of enduring reputation since But neither Jeremy Taylor nor John Donne could be considered as divines or religious leaders to rank with Andrewes and Baxter The history of that Anglican Church which we studied in the first chapters is richer and more interesting for Taylor and Donne, but they cannot be considered to have molded its forms and determined its destinies in the fashion in which both Richard Baxter and Lancelot Andrewes did, to the latter of whom the High Churchman of the present looks back as to one of the most notable defenders of his tradition, and to the former of whom the Free Churchman looks with reverence as to, if he will pardon a figure of speech not in the best traditions of the Free Church, one of his greatest patron saints. In such a company Taylor and Donne must take second rank But from another point of view their position is very different. For they are the two of this group whose position in the memory of history is least likely to suffer in the future from changes of fashion in the forms of faith and piety. The magnificent prose of Taylor has won for him the unfailing plaudits of even those who would never have any sympathy for the subject matter of that beautiful prose And the poetry of Donne, ranging from the glow of the senses in the love poems to the all but mystical fire of the religious verses, with every attendant variation of intellectual curiosity and imaginative fertility to enrich it, has given him a reputation which in these days of greater sympathy with the seventeenth century grows yearly more brilliant and is likely to go on growing more brilliant for some time to come. Indeed, where heretofore Donne's reputation has been somewhat obscure and curious, a matter of special interest, and Taylor's settled and constant as of a long acknowledged classic, there is much to suggest that Taylor will be left in classic shades as quaint and of his time, while Donne enjoys the dubious honors of a vogue as a "modern" Finally, one more point should be noted in this comparison between the two *Holy Living and Holy Dying* is not only the recognized masterpiece of Taylor, but for the student of English literature his chief claim to remembrance; but Donne's *Devotions upon Emergent Occasions* were until very recently among the obscurest of his works

Even now they are hardly known at all in the annals of English devotion

In point of time *The Private Devotions* of Lancelot Andrewes come first, though they were not actually published until after his death, in portions in 1638 and in a degree of completeness in 1675 In 1630 passages were very partially and incompletely presented in English in the *Institutiones Piae* of Henry Isaacson, who had been Andrewes' secretary In 1648 Richard Drake made a very careful translation of the Greek text Drake also translated Andrewes' *Manual of Directions for the Sick* from the Greek text and published it in 1648 Since the Latin version of *The Private Devotions* was left incomplete and unorganized by its author, it is the Greek text that has furnished the basis of the various English translations that have made Andrewes one of the classics of English devotion from that time to this

In spite of the fact that Andrews was probably more than anybody else the founder of that movement in English devotion to which both Donne and later Taylor belonged, he seems when placed beside them to come from a much older time The form in which he writes is, to begin with, an older form *The Private Devotions* may be regarded as the crowning triumph of those manuals of prayers for every day in the week that go back through the early Protestant Primers and Prayer Books to the Primers and Manuals of pre-Reformation England It was indeed, as we have seen, the favorite type for English devotional writers.

But there are several circumstances that make this book of peculiar interest even in its own class To begin with, we know more of its personal associations than we do in the case of most of these books For these prayers were composed by the saintly bishop for his own personal use The main lines of their plan suggest how practically they were directed to his problems and his needs Into the molds of these daily necessities he poured all the rich treasures of his vast scholarship and a lifetime of reflection The result is at once a certain directness and simplicity, combined with extraordinary depth and richness of thought and feeling Here one finds on a small scale that singular richness of allusion, that deep savor of things long brooded over and from a hundred minds made one's own, that constitutes so much of the charm

of the *Imitation* of Thomas à Kempis *The Private Devotions* of Bishop Andrewes have this in common with the *Imitation,* too, that intimately as they seem to spring from the heart of the writer, they have yet a certain austerity, a certain objective impersonality, as if in the presence of its God the soul sheds its idiosyncracy and, laying down all shadow of temperament and whim, finds in what is least personal the fullest expression of its innermost being. It is said that the manuscript of these prayers was found after Andrewes' death frayed and worn away by the constant pressure of his fingers and stained with his tears But there is no trace of such emotional stress in the lines themselves The rhetoric stays fresh and clear, and the curious reader finds in these austere pages not the tattered pageantry of the saint's soul laid bare for disengaged wonder, but the known lineaments of his own too generic soul in those hopes and failures and regrets and yearnings that furnish the secret closets of us all This is perhaps the ultimate secret of the greatness of the prayers of Bishop Andrewes as of all classics, whether in belles lettres or devotion

For the fundamental plan of these prayers, it is clear that Andrewes did not intend more than a general guide or suggestion Many of the forms suggested are really little more than reminders to guide the development of the confession or the supplication or whatever happened to be the purpose of the particular prayer then in hand In some cases what Andrewes gives is not very much more than a bare outline, obviously intended to be filled in on particular occasions Such an outline is to be found, for instance, among the "Prayers for the First Day"

I Lift up my hands, O Lord, unto Thy Commandments, which I have loved
Open mine eyes, and I shall see,
Incline my Heart, and I shall affect,
Order my steps, and I shall walk in the path of Thy Commandments

O Lord God,
Be thou my God
Let me have no other God but Thee,
No other beside Thee,
Nothing else with Thee.

Grant that
I may worship and serve Thee
with { [1]Truth of Spirit,
[2]Decency of Body,
[3]Benediction of Mouth, }
In [4]Publick and Private

Grant also,
That I may render
[5]Honor to my Governors,
By Obedience and Submission to them who have the rule over me
Naturall affection to those who belong to me
By taking care of, and providing for them

That I may
[6]Over come evill with good
[7]Keep my vessell in holinesse and honor
[8]Have my conversation without covetousness, and be content with such things as I have
[9]Professe the Truth with Charity

[10]Desire, not { covet
lust in concupiscence
walk after my lusts[1] }

For the general arrangement of these prayers, that for the first day may be taken as an example. It begins with an introductory prayer and a prayer of praise, and then proceeds to an extended confession, the prayer for help given above, a more detailed prayer for grace, a lengthy profession of faith, an even longer intercession for all manner of men, and ends finally with another prayer of praise.[2] To judge from the eccentric margins with which these devotions are usually printed, it was apparently the bishop's intention that every part of a prayer should very carefully be dwelt upon, the mind sweeping deliberately from clause to clause with every encouragement to develop the implications of each petition. While it is not always easy for the modern reader to pick up the hidden inwardness of some of the transitions, it is very evident that the author had thought out the relations of the

[1] *A Manual of the Private Devotions and Meditations of the Right Reverend Father in God, Lancelot Andrews*, trans. and ed. R. Drake (London, 1648), pp. 52-56. Illustrative texts inserted by the editor are here omitted.

[2] *Ibid.*, pp. 36-89.

various ideas and impulses involved with more rigor and persistence of logic than is usually found among writers of this genre

The themes of these prayers are the classic themes of seventeenth century devotion—appeals for forgiveness, elaborate acknowledgements of sin, self-reminders of the vanity of man's life, and so on But there is among them almost none of that theological instruction with which so many seventeenth century divines were wont to remind the Lord of the essential principles of their sect And there is much of a tender charity which constantly recommends very diverse groups of men to the mercy and care of God with an unusually detailed remembrance of their peculiar needs This is one of the most attractive features of these prayers. But still more remarkable for this literature is the way in which Andrewes dwells at length on the goodness and glory of God On one day he may seem to have done full justice even to that inexhaustible subject, yet on the next he returns unwearied to the pursuit of what clearly was the best-loved theme of all The following "Praise" with which the prayers of the first day conclude is as good an example as any of what is, next to the ever-mindful charity noted above, the most characteristic charm of these devotions.

> Let us lift up our hearts unto the Lord, as it is very meet, right, and our bounden duty, that we should *in* all, and *for* all Things, *at* all *Times*, *in* all *Places*, *by* all *Means*, ever, every where, every way,
>
> Make mention of Thee,
> Confess to Thee,
> Bless Thee,
> Worship Thee,
> Praise Thee,
> Sing laud to Thee,
> Give Thanks to Thee,

The { Fountain of Life and Immortality,
Threasury of eternal good things }

Whom

The { Heavens, and the Heavens of Heavens,
Angels, and all the Celestial Powers sing praise unto, }

Uncessantly crying one to another,
(and we, base and unworthy we, with them under their feet)
Holy, Holy, Holy,
Lord God of Hosts,
Heaven and Earth is full of the Majesty of Thy Glory
Blessed be the Glory of the Lord from His place

For His { Divinity,
Incomprehensibleness,
Sublimity,
Dominion,
Almightiness,
Eternity,
Praevision and Providence }

my God, my
Strength and Stay,
Refuge & Deliverer,
Helper and Defender,
Horn of salvation,
and my Lifter up [3]

Such a passage as the foregoing illustrates very well the general style and method of Andrewes The borrowings, the echoes, are almost too obvious to note, and yet the whole thing is no mosaic There is something organic shaping here, moving through the quotations and the adaptations, communicating to them its own unity and energy of purpose, until in those lines on the mysteriousness of the Godhead it swells into something unmistakably Andrewes' own For here as always in his writings the magnificence of imagination comes home to the need and the warm gratitude of the heart That is the final secret of the charm of Lancelot Andrewes

John Donne was Andrewes' younger contemporary by nearly twenty years, but he lived only some half dozen years beyond him In the spacious periods of history Donne is then for most purposes

[3] *Ibid*, pp 86-89

practically of his generation And yet it is hard to imagine any contrast greater than that between *The Private Devotions* of the Bishop of Winchester and the *Devotions upon Emergent Occasions* of the Dean of Saint Paul's To begin with, the devotions of Andrewes were not given to the press while he lived, and Donne's little book of devotions was published by the author almost immediately Yet in spite of the fact that the one book was the secluded companion of the most private devotions of the author, and the other was shared at once with a world that had long been wont to follow with respectful but curious interest the outward evidence of the author's spiritual pilgrimage, the first book is impersonal and objective to the verge of austerity, and the second is so personal that even the reader who takes no interest in devotion will find the *Devotions upon Emergent Occasions* of engrossing interest for their highly personal revelations of the author's very recent experience It would be easy to say that if Andrewes gives us the classic of devotion, Donne gives us the romantic, but the word *romantic* in English literature suggests the poetry of the first half of the nineteenth century, and nothing could be wider of the mark for Donne than that It would be nearer the truth to say that where Andrewes has his eyes steadily fixed on the object of his devotions, Donne's restless eyes are forever straying to that object of perennial curiosity, himself Even in his moments of deepest and sincerest religious feeling—and that passionate heart of his was capable of great depth of feeling in this as in any other realm to which he gave it—even in these moments of what we may call religious passion, Donne could not cease to observe himself It is a very interesting difference this, for it gives us the key to the very different estimates that must be made of two great books

It is the content of the book that draws us to Andrewes' and the author of the book that draws us to Donne's It is from first to last as a book of devotion, that we value Andrewes' work, it is as a book of religious psychology, a book of deep and intimate self-revelation, that we treasure Donne's For Donne's book records the spiritual side of the case history of a serious illness of his, in which as the doctors watched the fluctuations of his chills and his fevers, he watched with no less patience and no less keen-

ness the ebbs and flows of terror and hope in his spirit It is a chapter from that spiritual clinic to which he brought his soul so often, in which one is tempted to say he kept his soul But true as that is from so many aspects, it yet gives a false impression of Donne, for to say that a man keeps his soul in a clinic is to suggest something timid, something morbid in his being, and nothing could be farther than that from the large, vigorous nature of Donne For this self-scrutiny, sharp and unremitting as it is, is only one among the many interests and the many pursuits of that agile intellect and that fecund imagination of his Indeed, Donne watches the pulse of his own feelings no less dispassionately and no more enthusiastically than he threads the argument of a foreign divine on the relations of civil and religious power This self-observation of Donne's is as far from the puling self-cossetting of egotism as the insatiate and restless curiosity of his mind, prowling through all the intellectual jungles of his time, is from the vulgar impertinences of fashionable dilettanteism and inquisitiveness But when all has been said that is needed to do justice to the depth and sincerity of religious apprehension and sensibility of one of the most genuinely religious of English poets, it still remains true that the *Devotions upon Emergent occasions* are much more significant from the literary than the devotional point of view.

The title-page of the 1624 edition gives the clearest idea of the origin of this work.

> *Deuotions vpon Emergent Occasions and seuerall steps in my Sicknes*
> Digested into
> 1 Meditations *vpon our Humane Condition*
> 2 Expostulations, *and Debatements with God*
> 3 Prayers, *vpon the seuerall occasions, to him*

If one may rely upon the tone and the countless circumstantial allusions in the book itself, it seems to have originated in a sort of diary kept during his illness, in which his anxious and restless mind recorded around the centre of pious reflection every remotely relevant idea that cropped up within its range Indeed, everything that comes to that extraordinary mill is grist At the

beginning he seems to have been sore beset with pain So he wonders in his first expostulation

If I were but meere *dust* and *ashes*, I might speak unto the *Lord*, for the *Lords* hand made me of this *dust*, and the *Lords* hand shall recollect these *ashes*, the Lords hand was the wheele, upon which this vessell of clay was framed, and the *Lordes hand* is the *Urne*, in which these ashes shall be preserv'd I am the *dust*, and the *ashes* of the *Temple* of the *H Ghost*, and what Marble is so precious? But I am more then *dust* and *ashes*, I am my best part, I am my *soule* And being so, the *breath* of *God*, I may breath back these pious *expostulations* to my God *My God, my God*, why is not my *soule*, as sensible as my *body?* Why hath not my *soule* these apprehensions, these presages, these changes, these antidates, these jealousies, these suspitions of a sinne, as well as my body of a sicknes?[4]

His friends do not come to see him, for they are afraid of infection, so he is left to the solitude he loathes, this man who once wrote in a letter to a friend that to be at court is to be in heaven We like him for his complaining of the defection of his friends It bears out all we know from other sources of his warm, friendly, sociable nature, but for the religious field of human experience this is a touchstone of the first importance, this reaction to solitude, and Donne does not come out of the affair very well from that point of view All the saints have been avid of solitude, for solitude rightly understood is the great opportunity of the saint. "My self and my Creator," said Newman But Donne will none of it "*Solitude* is a torment which is not threatned in *hell* itselfe," he cries as he waits for the physician to come[5]

We must not be too hard on him for this For always there are terrors waiting to rush in upon his consciousness when for a moment that busy watchman relaxes its vigilance There are those sins of which he has repented a thousand times There are those qualms which the stern logic of his time counted lapses of faith of sinister import There are those vagrancies of attention, those failures of resolution, which he has bewailed countless times, against which his laboring will has striven manfully in the teeth of a thousand defeats Now they come in and fill the moments of his sickness with their terror And again for the thousandth time he rises in his weakness as in his strength to do battle against

[4] John Donne, *Devotions upon Emergent Occasions*, ed John Sparrow, etc (Cambridge, 1923), pp 2-3

[5] *Ibid*, p 22.

them There is something magnificent in the indomitable resolution of this man, whose conscience is so acutely sensitive, whose imagination is so painfully alive He turns to God for help

> Deliver mee therefore, O my God, from these vaine imaginations, that it is an overcurious thing, a dangerous thing, to come to that tendernesse, that rawnesse, that scrupulousnesse, to fear every *concupiscence,* every offer of *Sin,* that this suspicious and jealous diligence will turne to an inordinate dejection of spirit, and a diffidence in thy care and providence, but keep me still establish'd, both in a constant assurance, that thou wilt speake to me at the beginning of every such sicknes, at the approach of every such *sinne* and that, if I take knowledge of that voice then, and flye to thee, thou wilt preserve mee from falling, or raise me againe, when by naturall infirmitie I am fallen doe this, *O Lord,* for his sake, who knows our naturall infirmities, for he had them, and knowes the weight of our sinns, for he paid a deare price for them, thy *Sonne,* our *Saviour,* Chr Jesus, *Amen* [6]

After such a passage as that, it is pleasant to know that there were hours, after perhaps that busy bell of the neighboring cathedral had been silent a while, and perhaps some bolder friend than most had dropped in at the Deanery to cheer its society-loving prisoner, when his reflections took a happier turn Then he could write of more joyous thoughts with a beauty that matched the sombre splendor with which he had set forth his fears The following "Prayer" is the fruit of such an hour

> O Eternall and most gracious *God,* who though thou passedst over infinite millions of generations, before thou camest to a *Creation* of this *world,* yet when thou beganst, didst never intermit that *worke,* but continuedst *day* to *day,* till thou hadst perfited all the *worke,* and deposed it in the hands and rest of a *Sabbath,* though thou have been pleased to *glorifie* thy selfe in a long exercise of my *patience,* with an *expectation* of thy *declaration* of thy selfe in this my sicknesse, yet since thou hast now of thy goodnesse afforded that, which affords us some hope, if that be still *the way* of thy *glory,* proceed in *that way,* and perfit *that worke,* and establish me in a *Sabbath,* and *rest* in *thee,* by this thy *seale* of *bodily restitution* Thy *Priests* came up to thee, by *steps* in the *Temple,* Thy *Angels* came *downe* to *Jaacob* by *steps* upon the *ladder,* we find no *staire,* by which thou *thy selfe* camest to *Adam* in *Paradise,* nor to *Sodome* in thine *anger,* for *thou* and *thou onely,* art able to doe all at once But, O *Lord,* I am not *wearie* of thy *pace,* nor *wearie* of mine owne *patience* I provoke thee not with a *praier,* not with a *wish,* not with a *hope,* to more haste than consists with thy *purpose,* nor looke that any other thing should have entred into thy *purpose,* but thy *glory* To *heare* thy steps comming *towards* mee is the same comfort, as to see thy face present with mee, whether

[6] *Ibid*, p 5

> thou doe the worke of a *thousand yeeres* in a *day,* or extend the *worke of a day,* to a *thousand yeeres,* as long as *thou workest,* it is *light,* and *comfort* *Heaven* it selfe is but an *extention* of the same *joy,* and an *extention* of this *mercie,* to proceed at thy *leisure,* in the way of *restitution,* is a *manifestation* of *heaven* to me here upon *earth* From that *people,* to whom thou appearedst in *signes* and in *Types,* the Jewes, thou art departed, because they trusted in *them*, but from thy *Church,* to whom thou hast appeared in *thy selfe,* in thy *Sonne,* thou wilt never depart, because we cannot trust *too much* in *him* Though thou have afforded me these *signes* of *restitution,* yet if I *confide* in *them,* and *beginne* to say, all was but a *natural accident,* and *nature* begins to *discharge* her selfe, and shee will perfit the whole *worke,* my *hope* shall vanish because it is not in *thee* If thou shouldest take thy *hand* utterly from me, and have nothing to doe with me, *nature* alone were able to *destroy* me, but if thou withdraw thy *helping hand,* alas, how frivolous are the helps of *Nature,* how impotent the assistances of *Art?* As therefore the *morning dew,* is a *pawne* of the *evening fatnesse,* so, O *Lord,* let *this daies* comfort be the *earnest* of to *morrowes,* so far as may *conforme* me entirely to thee, to what *end,* and by what *way* soever thy *mercie* have appointed mee[7]

In such moments that tortured spirit found peace, and the literary gifts that had embroidered the sad tapestry of woe so brilliantly made no less gorgeous the vision of peace and gratitude

There are ways in which the personality of Richard Baxter is quite as engaging as that of John Donne There has come down from his time abundant evidence of the charm of his personality, of the sweetness of his charity, of the magnetism of his piety Without doubt he contributed as much as any man to the evolution of the religious life of his age And no man of his day was better loved or more revered as a master In every sense of the word he was a great religious leader, and that Donne was not. But Baxter's is a personality that for all the pain of inner struggle and of external misunderstanding and even persecution yet makes upon our minds the impression of a strong and harmonious personality, sore-beset often enough and yet fundamentally at one with itself So inasmuch as Baxter was that sort of man and Donne was not, he must remain even to lovers of Donne a greater man, but he was not nearly so interesting

Baxter's masterpiece, *The Saints' Everlasting Rest,* belongs to a type which we have already encountered in other works of piety of the time, the treatise of persuasion to the life of devotion It is an ancient type, obviously arising out of the homily and the

[7] *Ibid*, pp 118-119

sermon Nowhere is its purpose better defined than in the conclusion of *The Saint's Everlasting Rest*

Thus, Reader, I have given thee my best advice, for the attaining and maintaining a heavenly Conversation The manner is imperfect, and too much mine own, but for the main matter, I dare say, I received it from God From him I deliver it thee, and his charge I lay upon thee, That thou entertain and practise it If thou canst not do it methodically and fully, yet do it as thou canst, onely, be sure thou do it seriously and frequently If thou wilt believe a man that hath made some small Trial of it, thou shalt finde, it will make thee another man, and elevate thy soul, and clear thine understanding, and polish thy conversation, and leave a pleasant savour upon thy heart, so that thy own experience will make thee confess, That one hour thus spent will more effectually revive thee, then many in bare external duties, and a day in these contemplations will afford thee truer content, then all the glory and riches of the Earth Be acquainted with this work, and thou wilt be (in some remote sort) acquainted with God Thy joys will be spiritual, and prevalent, and lasting, according to the nature of their blessed Object, thou wilt have comfort in life, and comfort in death, When thou hast neither wealth nor health, nor the pleasure of this world, yet wilt thou have comfort Comfort without the presence, or help of any Friend, without a Minister, without a Book, when all means are denied thee, or taken from thee, yet maist thou have vigorous, reall Comfort Thy Graces will be mighty, and active, and victorious, and the daily joy which is thus fetcht from Heaven, will be thy strength Thou wilt be as one that standeth on the top of an exceeding high Mountain, he looks down on the world as if it were quite below him How small do the Fields, and Woods, and Countreys seem to him? Cities and Towns seem but little spots Thus despicably wilt thou look on all things here below The greatest Princes will seem below thee but as Grashoppers, and the busie, contentious, covetous world, but as a heap of Ants Mens threatnings will be no terrour to thee, nor the honours of this world, any strong enticement Temptations will be more harmles, as having lost their strength, and Afflictions less grievous, as having lost their sting, and every Mercy will be better known and relished

Reader, it is, under God, in thine own choice now, whether thou wilt live this blessed life or not, and whether all this pains which I have taken for thee, shall prosper or be lost [8]

In other words, Baxter's purpose is to set men's feet on the lowest rungs of that ladder of contemplation that will lead them from the low ground of pious aspiration and meditation to the heights of communion with God Like most of his group he puts the greater part of his energy into persuasion, painting in colors

[8] Richard Baxter, *The Saints Everlasting Rest* (3rd ed , London, 1652), Part IV, pp 295-296

of extraordinary brightness and energy the joys of the blessed who have their conversation in heaven and the misery of those who give themselves to this miserable world alone The ideas that he takes as the basis of his operation are the stock ideas of the Puritan of his time He suggests with gruesome vividness the tortures of the damned

> As therefore when God will purposely then glorifie his Mercy, he will do it in a way and degree that is now incredible and beyond the comprehension of the Saints that must enjoy it So also, when the time comes that he will purposely manifest his Justice, it shall appear to be indeed the Justice of God, The everlasting flames of Hell will not be thought too hot for the rebellious, and when they have there burned through millions of Ages, he will not repent him of the evil which is befaln them [9]

Like a good Calvinist Baxter believes in Predestination, and like most English Calvinists he insists that the elect should labor to make their calling sure Some of the most powerful passages in the book he addresses to those who are content to rest in general guarantees without making certain that they may be applied to themselves The following is one example among many

> I wonder how thou canst either think or speak of the dreadfull God, without exceeding terror and astonishment, as long as thou art uncertain whether he be thy Father or thy Enemy, and knowest not but all his Attributes may be employed against thee How dost thou think without trembling upon Jesus Christ? when thou knowest not whether his blood hath purged thy Soul or not? and whether he will condemn thee or acquit thee in Judgement, nor whether he be set for thy rising or thy fall, *Luk* 2 34 nor whether he be the corner-Stone and Foundation of thy happiness, or a stone of stumbling to break thee and grind thee to powder How canst thou open the Bible, and read a Chapter, or hear a Chapter read, but it should terrifie thee? Methinks every leaf should be to thee as Belshazzars writing upon the wall, except only that which draws thee to try and reform [10]

Baxter does not limit this anxiety to our own salvation Indeed, one of his chief reproaches to his age is that "Secret Infidelity" which allows men to suffer their friends and neighbors to go their own way to perdition without making any effort to

[9] *Ibid*, Part III, p 61
[10] *Ibid*, Part III, pp 134-135

save them "Did we verily believe," he cries in one of the most moving passages of the book

> that all the unregenerate and unholy shal be eternally tormented, as God hath said, Oh how could we hold our tongues when we are among the unregenerate? How could we chuse but burst out into tears when we look them in the face, as the Prophet did when he looked upon *Hazael*? Especially when they are our kindred or friends that are near and dear to us? Thus doth secret unbelief of the Truth of Scripture, consume the vigour of each grace and duty Oh Christians, if you did verily believe, that your poor, carnal, ungodly neighbors, or wife, or husband, or childe, should certainly lie for ever in the flames of Hell, except they be throughly recovered and changed, and that quickly before death doth snatch them hence, Would not this make you cast off all discouragements, and lie at them day and night till they were perswaded? Oh were it not for this cursed Unbelief, our own Souls and our neighbors would gain more by us then they do [11]

There is no question that the energy, the dramatic quality, of a passage like the foregoing made life interesting for the pious Indeed, it must have made of every day life itself a most thrilling drama in which the spiritual protagonist found himself engaged in the most important of all struggles, with not only his own soul but the soul of his neighbor at stake and eternal felicity for the price of a manly fight It is no wonder that a writer with the gift of imparting to the hardest and probably the most discouraging of the tasks of this life, the battle of the soul with itself, so much fire and drama should find a hearer in thousands to whom the ordinary offices of piety had seemed dull and uninteresting Even to one who does not share the predestinarian theology there is something infectious in the way in which this passion and zest of Baxter drive through the book There are passages in the work which grate on the modern mind, but there is nothing dull or uninteresting about it The fire of the writer's enthusiasm kindles the reader's sympathies and carries him along in spite of his own predilections and his own prejudices After all, there is a peculiar satisfaction in finding any one of the great historic points of view presented with so much fullness and gusto, with so much radiance of conviction, with so affectionate a charity of persuasiveness

Here in Baxter's book as in Andrewes' one is conscious of a rich store of allusion But Baxter differs from Andrewes in the

[11] *Ibid*, Part III, pp 294-295

directness and concentration of his allusions For him as for the Puritan in general, the Bible is the best of his history and his science, and his supreme literary delight In his moments of rarest inspiration its images and its phrases come to express and to heighten his own intuition The beauty of heaven itself is fairer to him for the phrases of Scripture with which he takes possession of his vision So in the second of those two chapters on heavenly contemplation the author conjures up the delight of a hundred readings of his favorite Scripture passages, to rouse the sluggish aspiration of the reader to the height of the great vision that has just given his own indomitable spirit wings from the sickness in which he was writing

Here then, Reader, take thy *heart* once again, as it were, by the hand, Bring it to the top of the highest Mount, if it be possible, to some *Atlas* above the clouds, shew it the *Kingdom of Christ,* and the *glory* of it say to it, *All this will thy Lord bestow upon thee, who hast believed in him, and been a worshipper of him* It is the *Fathers* good pleasure to give thee this *Kingdom,* Seest thou this *astonishing glory* above thee? Why all this is thy own inheritance This Crown is thine, these pleasures are thine, this company, this beauteous place is thine, all things are thine, because thou art Christs, and Christ is thine, when thou wast married to him, thou hadst all this with him

Thus take thy *heart* into the *Land of Promise,* shew it the pleasant hills, and fruitful valleys Shew it the clusters of Grapes which thou hast gathered; & by those convince it that it is a blessed Land, flowing with better then milk and honey, enter the gates of the *Holy City,* walk through the streets of the *New Jerusalem,* walk about *Sion,* go round about her, tell the Towers thereof, mark well her bulwarks, consider her places, that thou mayst tell it to thy Soul The building of the walls of it are of Jasper, and the City is of pure gold, as clear as glass, The foundation is garnished with precious stones, and the twelve gates are twelve pearls, every several gate is of one Pearl, and the street of the City is pure Gold, as it were transparent glass, There is no Temple in it, *for the Lord God Almighty, and the Lamb are the Temple of it* It hath no need of Sun or Moon to shine in it, for the *Glory of God* doth lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof, and the Nations of them which are saved shall walk in the light of it What sayst thou now to all this? This is thy Rest, O my Soul, and this must be the place of thy Everlasting habitation [12]

Such was the hope which Baxter offered to his reader in those troublous years that followed the first publication of *The Saints' Everlasting Rest* in 1650 It is no wonder that men from the lowest to the highest ranks took this book to their hearts and made

[12] *Ibid.*, Part IV, pp 205-206

of it one of the most popular companions to the Bible that England had ever seen, one that has come down almost to our own day in actual popular use, and one likely to linger long in the appreciative memory of the lover of ancient piety

Jeremy Taylor's *The Rule and Exercises of Holy Living* was published in the same year as Baxter's book, in 1650, and the companion piece always linked with it, *The Rule and Exercises of Holy Dying,* was published in 1651 There is more than the accident of history in this, because while Donne's book sums up some of the most characteristic elements in the religious life of his time, it is too individual to be representative, and classic as Andrewes' and Baxter's works are, they are yet limited in their relations to the other devotional books of their time But Jeremy Taylor's treatises are far more representative of the total body of literature which we have been considering in earlier chapters It is therefore peculiarly fitting that his work should complete our definition of the group, for his two treatises are at once the most representative and the finest of all the devotional books of the time In them the devotional period which we have been studying finds its logical and its fitting end

In the dedicatory address to the Earl of Carberry which Taylor prefixed to *Holy Living,* he very plainly and explicitly sets forth his purpose and his intentions in writing this book It was out of an age in which, as he picturesquely put it, he had seen "religion painted upon banners, and thrust out of churches," that he wrote: "In the mean time, and now that religion pretends to stranger actions upon new principles, and men are apt to prefer a prosperous error before an afflicted truth, and some will think they are religious enough if their worshippings have in them the prevailing ingredient, and the ministers of religion are so scattered, that they cannot unite to stop the inundation, and from chairs or pulpits, from their synods or tribunals, chastise the iniquity of the error, and the ambition of evil guides, and the infidelity of the willingly seduced multitude, and that those few good people who have no other plot in their religion but to serve God and save their souls, do want such assistances of ghostly counsel as may serve their emergent needs, and assist their endeavours in the acquist of virtues, and relieve their dangers when

they are tempted to sin and death, I thought I had reasons enough inviting me to draw into one body those advices, which the several necessities of many men must use at some time or other, and many of them daily: that by a collection of holy precepts they might less feel the want of personal and attending guides, and that the rules for conduct of souls might be committed to a book, which they might always have, since they could not always have a prophet at their needs, nor be suffered to go up to the house of the Lord to enquire of the appointed oracles"[13]

In other words, *Holy Living* combines the book of directions for the life of prayer, the book of prayers, the book of meditations, and the book of general directions for a godly life, such as we have studied in preceding chapters, all in one But this does not mean that there is anything crowded or condensed in the result *The Rule and Exercises of Holy Living* opens with philosophic leisureliness and systematic and ordered deliberation, and so it proceeds down to the collection of prayers for particular occasions with which it concludes Nothing better suggests the expansive leisureliness of its procedure than the opening of the work with the "Consideration of the General Instruments and Means serving to a Holy Life, by Way of Introduction," with its enumeration of the particular instruments of holy living, "Care of our Time" for the first, "Purity of Intention" for the second, and the "Practise of the Presence of God" for the third Then the author proceeds to subsume the principles of Christian living under the heads of Christian sobriety, Christian justice, and Christian religion, each with its careful analysis into its constituent parts, followed by appropriate prayers for particular circumstances There is nothing especially original in such a proceeding, but Taylor's use of this method is distinguished for its remarkable orderliness and composure of development

As the foregoing outline suggests, Taylor begins his survey of the religious life very nobly with that fundamental of all fundamentals, the practise of the presence of God That is a grand phrase, *the practise of the presence of God,* one fraught with glorious memories in the history of mysticism A few sentences

[13] Jeremy Taylor, *The Rule and Exercises of Holy Living*, ed A R Waller (London, 1901), I, 1-2

taken in order from this chapter will indicate the range of Taylor's grasp of the technique of devotion implied in such a phrase "Let everything you see represent to your spirit the presence, the excellence, and the power of God, and let your conversation with the creatures lead you unto the Creator, for so shall your actions be done more frequently with an actual eye to God's presence by your often seeing Him in the glass of the creation,"[14] is a sentence that well sums up the great effort of seventeenth century humanism to lead the eye of the Christian from his delight in the splendor of the curious wonder of the world to Him who made it "Let us remember that God is in us, and that we are in Him: we are His workmanship, let us not deface it, we are in His presence, let us not pollute it by unholy and impure actions,[15]" is another. And the heart of the matter is to be found in the last of these adjurations to make of this universal dogma of Christianity a positive force in the life of the devout "He walks as in the presence of God that converses with Him in frequent prayer and frequent communion, that runs to him in all his necessities, that asks counsel of Him in all his doubtings, that opens all his wants to Him, that weeps before Him for his sins, that asks remedy and support for his weakness; that fears Him as a judge, reverences Him as a lord, obeys Him as a father, and loves Him as a patron."[16]

It is characteristic of Taylor and of the devotional movement which he represents that in the handling of this theme that has so often moved the mystic to ecstacy there is no trace of the intimately personal or of the highly emotional The whole treatment is austerely objective and controlled, well within the bounds of that sobriety which Taylor and his colleagues held to be the proper temper of the Christian life

This does not mean that on occasion Taylor cannot give way to movingly tender and intimate feeling There is for evidence the "Act of Desire" in his prayers for the Lord's Supper, rich in

[14] *Ibid*, I, 45
[15] *Ibid*, I, 46
[16] *Ibid*, I, 47

its echoes of mediaeval Communion prayers and yet warm with his own peculiar accent of personal yearning

> O blessed Jesus, Thou hast used many arts to save me, Thou hast given Thy life to redeem me, Thy holy spirit to sanctify me, Thyself for my example, Thy word for my rule, Thy grace for my guide, the fruit of Thy body hanging on the tree of the cross for the sin of my soul, and after all this Thou hast sent Thy apostles and ministers of salvation to call me, to importune me, to constrain me, to holiness, and peace, and felicity O now come, Lord Jesus, come quickly, my heart is desirous of Thy presence and thirsty of Thy grace, and would fain entertain Thee not as a guest but as an inhabitant, as the Lord of all my faculties Enter in and take possession, and dwell with me for ever, that I also may dwell in the heart of my dearest Lord, which was opened for me with a spear and love [17]

What Taylor is trying to accomplish in his book is the ancient work of the humanist, of bringing order into chaos, light and reasonableness into blindness and absurdity, moderation and grace into passion and violence He is, like the great masters of devotion whose portraits the Abbé Brémond has so brilliantly drawn in his *L'Humanisme Dévot*, a Christian humanist, but humanist he is, quite as much as Christian This fact comes out in a hundred ways, often where one would least think of looking for it The mystery of why men who acknowledge an eternal difference in the fundamental values of this life yet persist in cultivating what they admit to be of the inferior order to the neglect or the exclusion of what they say they prefer, is one that profoundly exercised the devotional writers of the seventeenth century as it has exercised the moralists of all ages It is a tempting theme for all the preacher's resources of invective and exhortation and, as most of the world's moralists have found, a limitless one But Jeremy Taylor, like Bunyan after him in a very different context, saw the absurdity, the fundamental unreason, the cosmic incongruity in the situation, and it is from this angle that he attacks it in the following passage

> Let every man suppose what opinion he should have of one that should spend his time in playing with drum-sticks and cockle-shells, and that should wrangle all day long with a little boy for pins, or should study hard and labour to cozen a child of his gauds, and who would run into a river deep and dangerous, with a great burden upon his back, even then when he were told

[17] *Ibid*, II, 186

of the danger, and earnestly importuned not to do it, and let him but change the instances and the person, and he shall find he hath the same reason to think as bad of himself, who pursues trifles with earnestness, spending his time in vanity, and his 'labour for that which profits not,' who knowing the laws of God, the rewards of virtue, the cursed consequents of sin, that it is an evil spirit that tempts him to it, a devil, one that hates him, that longs extremely to ruin him, that it is his own destruction that he is then working, that the pleasures of his sin are base and brutish, unsatisfying in the enjoyment, soon over, shameful in their story, bitter in the memory, painful in the effect here, and intolerable hereafter, and for ever, yet in despite of all this, he runs foolishly into his sin and his ruin, merely because he is a fool, and winks hard, and rushes violently like a horse into the battle, or like a madman to his death He that can think great and good things of such a person, the next step may court the rack for an instrument of pleasure, and admire a swine for wisdom, and go for counsel to the prodigal and trifling grasshopper [18]

Once Taylor summed up his notion of the part of right reason in the Christian life, and in so doing, put the creed of Christian humanism into a sentence

Christian religion, in all its moral parts, is nothing else but the law of nature, and great reason, complying with the great necessities of all the world, and promoting the great profit of all relations, and carrying us through all accidents of variety of chances to that end which God hath from eternal ages purposed for all that live according to it, and which He hath revealed in Jesus Christ [19]

It is not surprising, therefore, that when he makes that great appeal of the humanist to the final court of experience, he goes outside the limits of the Christian tradition for many of his examples, and that when he wishes to illustrate some basic principles of human conduct or human nature, he draws with equal sympathy upon Old Testament history and tradition, classical antiquity, the New Testament, the Fathers of the Church, mediaeval, and even contemporary history and hear-say, as represented in poet and historian and moralist In Taylor's writings there is no line between Pagan and Christian, and he draws upon both without discrimination, for the non-sectarian tragedies and triumphs of human existence Indeed, in a passage like the following he seems utterly oblivious of any difference in dispensation as he moves from one instance to another "Do not the 'work of God negligently' (Jer xlviii 10) and idly let not thy heart be upon the

[18] *Ibid*, I, 131-132
[19] *Ibid*, I, 75

world, when thy hanc is lift up in prayer and be sure to prefer an act of religion, in is place and proper season, before all worldly pleasure, letting secular things, that may be dispensed with in themselves, in these circumstances wait upon the other. not like the patriarch, who ran from the altar of St Sophia to his stable, in all his pontificals, and in the midst of his office, to see a colt newly fallen from his beloved and much-valued mare Phorbante. More prudent and severe was that of Sir Thomas More, who, being sent for by the king when he was at his prayers in public, returned answer, he would attend him, when he had first performed his service to the King of kings And it did honour to Rusticus that when letters from Caesar were given to him, he refused to open them till the philosopher had done his lecture In honouring God and doing His work, put forth all thy strength, for of that time only thou mayest be most confident that it is gained, which is prudently and zealously spent in God's service"[20]

And yet brilliant as is the range of historic allusion in these treatises, there is nothing exotic or pedantic in their temper Again and again, the splendor of historic reminiscence gives way to that home-spun practicality that we have found so notable a feature of all these books. And the same man who a few pages back was marshalling all the pageantry of history for good and ill example to enforce the need of complete self-surrender to the life of devotion is now exhorting the drunkard to the reform of his ways with a shrewdness of insight into his case and a salty sympathy that seem to belong to another world altogether He does not scruple to descend to the most commonplace detail in such a passage as this advice to the weak-headed drinker "Be severe in your judgment concerning your proportions, and let no occasion make you enlarge far beyond your ordinary For a man is surprised by parts, and while he thinks one glass more will not make him drunk, that one glass hath disabled him from well discerning his present condition and neighbour danger 'While men think themselves wise, they become fools' they think they shall taste the aconite and not die, or crown their heads with juice of poppy and not be drowsy: and if they drink off the whole vintage, still they think they can swallow another goblet But remember this, when-

[20] *Ibid*, I, 24

ever you begin to consider whether you nay safely take one draught more, it is then high time to give over let that be accounted a sign late enough to break off, for every reason to doubt is a sufficient reason to part company"[21]

It is this same directness of attention o the material detail as the symbol of general truth that, joined to a singular elevation and stateliness of view, gives to Taylor's style its incomparably noble and stirring magnificence And in this as in so many things his excellence is but eminence in qualities which even the least of these writers seems to have shared as the birthright of his time There have been other prose-writers in other ages who have known how to leave the accustomed plain of prose for these mountain heights of beauty and majesty, but few who can rise so inevitably, with so firmly unbroken line from the base to the summit, as these men of the seventeenth century Sometimes this power of style is to be discerned in the stately balance of cadences, as in these sentences from the "peroration concerning the contingencies and treatings of our departed friendsafter death, in order to their burial, etc.":

> But nothing of this concerns the dead in real and effective purposes, nor is it with care to be provided for by themselves, but it is the duty of the living For to them it is all one, whether they be carried forth upon a chariot or a wooden bier, whether they rot in the air or in the earth, whether they be devoured by fishes or by worms, by birds or by sepulchral dogs, by water or by fire, or by delay[22]

Again, the secret of this power is to be found in those dramatic contrasts in which the seventeenth century imagination took such delight, contrasts nowhere more apparent than in the strange juxtapositions of life and death in this mortal theatre of our existence There is an extraordinarily magnificent passage in the "General Considerations Preparatory to Death" that Taylor prefaced to *Holy Dying*

> A man may read a sermon, the best and most passionate that ever man preached, if he shall but enter into the sepulchres of kings In the same Escurial where the Spanish princes live in greatness and power, and decree war or peace, they have wisely placed a cemetery where their ashes and their

[21] *Ibid*, I, 91

[22] Jeremy Taylor, *The Rule and Exercises of Holy Dying*, ed A R Waller (London, 1901), p 336

> glory shall sleep till time shall be no more, and where our kings have been crowned, their ancestors lay interred, and they must walk over their grandsire's head to take his crown. There is an acre sown with royal seed, the copy of the greatest change from rich to naked, from ceiled roofs to arched coffins, from living like gods to die like men. There is enough to cool the flames of lust, to abate the heights of pride, to appease the itch of covetous desires, to sully and dash out the dissembling colours of a lustful, artificial, and imaginary beauty. There the warlike and the peaceful, the fortunate and the miserable, the beloved and the despised princes mingle their dust, and pay down their symbol of mortality, and tell all the world, that when we die our ashes shall be equal to kings, and our accounts easier, and our pains or our crowns shall be less.[23]

Death is a noble subject, and one peculiarly gracious to anyone who will yield himself to the full measure of its contemplation. Religion and poetry alike compelled the seventeenth century prose writer to that contemplation beyond the measure of most men, and he had his reward. In that field of our profoundest curiosity no age has wrought more zealously or more nobly, and of that age Taylor is in this field one of the greatest.

But death was not the only theme on which he could write with this spacious magnificence. In the first sentence of that section "Of contentedness in all estates and accidents" in *Holy Living* he strikes the same mighty stride:

> Virtues and discourses are, like friends, necessary in all fortunes, but those are the best, which are friends in our sadnesses, and support us in our sorrows and sad accidents, and in this sense, no man that is virtuous can be friendless, nor hath any man reason to complain of the divine providence, or accuse the public disorder of things, or his own infelicity, since God hath appointed one remedy for all the evils in the world, and that is a contented spirit: for this alone makes a man pass through fire, and not be scorched, through seas, and not be drowned, through hunger and nakedness, and want nothing.[24]

And this brilliant opening he follows through to an even more moving conclusion, the final paragraph of this discussion:

> We are in the world like men playing at tables, the chance is not in our power, but to play it is, and when it is fallen we must manage it as we can, and let nothing trouble us but when we do a base action, or speak like a fool, or think wickedly: these things God hath put into our powers, but concerning those things which are wholly in the choice of another, they cannot fall

[23] *Ibid.*, pp. 28-29.

[24] Jeremy Taylor, *The Rule and Exercises of Holy Living*, I, 142-143.

under our deliberation, and therefore neither are they fit for our passions My fear may make me miserable, but it cannot prevent what another hath in his power and purpose and prosperities can only be enjoyed by them who fear not at all to lose them, since the amazement and passion concerning the future takes off all the pleasure of the present possession, Therefore if thou hast lost thy hand, do not also lose thy constancy and if thou must die a little sooner, yet do not die impatiently For no chance is evil to him that is content, and to a man nothing is miserable, unless it be unreasonable No man can make another man to be his slave unless he hath first enslaved himself to life and death, to pleasure or pain, to hope or fear command these passions, and you are freer than the Parthian kings [25]

There is something not of the seventeenth century but of all time in that conclusion Socrates would have understood it, and so would Marcus Aurelius, and the unknown master who wrote the *Bhagavad Gita* Such a passage is not the height of Taylor's vision, but it is the level on which he joins the humanists of all ages, and in that passage, at least, he is worthy of their high company There are other passages in which he promises a richer comfort than that, a warmer joy, and in these, of course, he is more Christian But on that lower level he engages in an enterprise older than Christianity, an enterprise which Christianity came not to supersede but to lighten and to quicken with its fresh assurance that this ageless strife of man to wrest the recalcitrances of his own nature to the pattern of his highest vision is no dream or illusion but his soundest intuition of the nature of the universe In that faith, and the splendor with which Jeremy Taylor presents it, we may discern the most enduring claim of his works to remembrance And in this he is but the highest peak of the intellectual and spiritual range out of which he rises He is the greatest of these devotional writers in degree, but he is of their kind, made rich by their tradition, and his glory is rightly theirs

[25] *Ibid*, I, 147-148

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